University of Alberta

VISIBLE MINORITY SUPPORT STAFF AND THEIR PERCEPTIONS OF THE EMPLOYMENT ENVIRONMENT AT THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

by

Mélanie Anne Lizotte ©

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research in partial
fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Education

in

International/Intercultural Education

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The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research for acceptance, a thesis entitled "Visible Minority Support Staff and their Perceptions of the Employment Environment at the University of Alberta" by Mélanie Anne Lizotte in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Education in International/Intercultural Education.

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ABSTRACT

This thesis explores the employment environment as it is experienced by visible minority employees in support positions at the University of Alberta in Edmonton, Alberta, Canada. The research was conducted in collaboration with the Office of Human Rights at the University of Alberta, using qualitative research methods including interviews, questionnaires and document analysis.

The sample for the study included part- and full-time continuing support staff who designated themselves as visible minorities in an employment equity census administered by the Office of Human Rights. Of the 234 self-designated visible minorities, 89 completed questionnaires and nine were interviewed.

The findings show that, in many instances, visible minority employees view the University of Alberta as a supportive and equitable institution. However, there are other instances where the University may not be perceived to be as equitable.

It is hoped that this study will further the implementation of employment equity policies and assist in enhancing the employment environment at the University of Alberta.

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Chapter I

Background to the Study

Introduction

Due to immigration patterns since the mid-1940s, Canada has evolved, from a demographic, social and cultural standpoint, as an increasingly multicultural society with corresponding multicultural policies. A definition of multiculturalism is difficult to formulate as it tends to mean different things to different people. While some proponents of multiculturalism tend to focus on the right of ethnic minorities to express their cultural distinctiveness, others focus on the right of ethnic minorities to equality within the social, political and economic institutions of Canada. It is useful to note that Fleras (1992) defines the main tenet of multiculturalism to be "nothing less than the fair, just, and equitable treatment of minorities of all colors and cultures" (p. xiv).

Multiculturalism has had a strong impact on all sectors of Canadian society. Educational institutions, the criminal justice system and the media are among the institutions which have been affected by multiculturalism. These and other institutions have had to adjust to the changing demographic realities in Canada. These institutions have made efforts to become more representative, equitable and accessible for *all* Canadians. Despite these efforts, however, many ethnic minorities continue to encounter problems related to racial intolerance, such as racism and systemic discrimination.

Canada's strong commitment to addressing these problems and to multiculturalism in general is in keeping with its strong commitment to human rights overall. In a multicultural society, the rights of all peoples must be respected, regardless of culture, race, ethnicity or other characteristics such as gender or religious beliefs. Racism and discrimination violate the human rights of specific groups and individuals and must be addressed and eliminated in order to create a just multicultural society.

This study focuses on the human rights of ethnic minorities as they relate to employment. Promoting respect for these rights is one of the main objectives of employment equity. During the last decade in Canada, employment equity legislation and regulations have been implemented and refined in an attempt to remedy "deeply entrenched patterns of disadvantage in the Canadian workplace" for four officially designated groups: women, Aboriginal peoples, persons with disabilities and visible minorities (Agocs, Burr and Somerset, 1992, p. 37). This study focuses exclusively on visible minority employees. Visible minorities are defined under the Employment Equity Act, as "persons 'other than aboriginal peoples, who are, because of their race or color, in a visible minority in Canada,' and/or who identify themselves to their employer as such. Examples may include Blacks and persons of Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Filipino, Indo-Pakistani, West Asian or Southeast Asian ancestry" (Agocs et al., 1992, p. 10). It is important to stress that, in practice, this definition includes all individuals who perceive that they are a visible minority even though they may not be perceived by others to be visibly distinct from the standpoint of 'race or color.' For example, it is possible that a Caucasian person may experience discrimination related to such things as religious beliefs, accent, English language ability, or simply because they are an 'immigrant.' In this case, they may more readily identify with those who are visibly distinct.

At present, visible minorities represent approximately 12 percent of the workforce in Canada. However, studies have shown that visible minorities are underrepresented within specific areas of the workforce or they are underemployed considering their education and credentials. Visible minority employees tend to be absent from or underrepresented in positions of power such as supervisory, managerial, and decision-making positions.

Public sector institutions such as government departments, universities and colleges have an important role to play in promoting human rights in general. They also have a role to play in promoting employment equity. In the case of the University of Alberta, an Office of Human Rights was established in December of 1990. As stated in their Annual Report for the period January 1, 1995 to December 31, 1995, the Office of Human Rights was "established to assist and advise the University of Alberta community in achieving the goals regarding the promotion and recognition of human rights on campus set out in the University's mission statement and other documents and policies" (p. 1).

Former University of Alberta President Paul Davenport created the President's Employment Equity Implementation Committee (PEEIC) in June of 1991 in order to "prepare an employment equity plan for the University of Alberta which meets the terms and conditions of the Federal Contractors Program (FCP) and which is acceptable to the University community and observes the policies of the General Faculties Council and the Board of Governors respecting employment" (University of Alberta, 1994, p. vii). The result of this initiative is the document entitled *Opening Doors: A Plan for Employment Equity at the University of Alberta*. Employment equity is characterized by the University as the

> process by which artificial barriers to employment are systematically identified and removed. It is a way of ensuring that everyone gets employment, training and promotions based on merit. It is a means through which the University works towards making *all* of its employees - regardless of gender, race, color or disability - feel welcomed and valued. *Opening Doors* focuses on improving the work climate on campus. (University of Alberta, 1995, p.1)

The Office of Human Rights has undertaken and continues to undertake many initiatives which further the goals of *Opening Doors* such as administering an employment equity census, maintaining special bulletin boards to raise awareness of human rights and employment equity issues, coordinating conferences on employment equity-related issues, preparing catalogues of services of interest to designated groups, and offering courses on various issues which are pertinent to human rights and employment equity (University of Alberta, 1995).

Several of the objectives or recommendations outlined in *Opening Doors* make reference to the need for a study of the employment environment at the University of Alberta as experienced by members of designated groups - one of which is visible minorities. This is where the concept of pursuing a study regarding visible minority employees originated.

In accordance with a recommendation in *Opening Doors*, an Employment Equity Discretionary Fund was established in order to provide financial support for initiatives which would assist with the University of Alberta's employment equity goals. University of Alberta students, academic staff and support staff are invited to submit proposals for projects which they believe would further the goals set forth in *Opening Doors*. Funding for this study was awarded through the Employment Equity Discretionary Fund.

Research is very important in order to help implement employment equity objectives or policies. Research studies provide data to help gain a better understanding of the social and cultural realities of the workplace. Such studies reveal areas where change is needed to fulfill the goals and purposes of employment equity. They also help to ascertain which initiatives have had positive outcomes and therefore should be continued and reinforced. Thus far, there has not been a great deal of research regarding employment equity as it relates specifically to the designated groups at the University of Alberta.

The University of Alberta's Employment Equity Implementation Committee has, however, funded many *initiatives* that relate directly to employment equity at the University of Alberta. A few of the initiatives that were funded include: an Aboriginal daycare program, an Aboriginal scholars database to assist with faculty renewal, sign language interpreting for University of Alberta employees, and a project regarding women's experiences as faculty members in the sciences.

Studies related to educational equity have also been funded by the Employment Equity Implementation Committee. One of these studies was conducted in 1995 by Toh and Cawagas which focused on the experiences of visible minority students at the University of Alberta. Another study which has been funded involves the experiences of men and women in first year science courses.

There are also other studies which are not associated with the Employment Equity Discretionary Fund. For example, Louise Walden, a graduate student in Educational Policy Studies, is currently working on her doctoral thesis regarding the pay equity program for support staff at the University of Alberta which was implemented in 1989. In addition, University Teaching Services has sponsored an educational equity study which is currently being conducted by Dr. S. H. Toh also of Educational Policy Studies. This study examines models of University teaching which promote respect for equity and cultural difference. The above noted studies and initiatives provide a background as to the kinds of equity related endeavors pursued at the University of Alberta to date.

Although it will be important to look at all levels of staff from designated and non-designated groups in both the academic and support areas at the University of Alberta, this study focuses exclusively on visible minority employees in support positions. In this regard, the choice has been influenced by my personal experiences as a support staff employee in a higher education context. I am currently employed as a Student Advisor in Services for Students with Disabilities and, in the past, have worked in many other areas on campus. These experiences have provided me with some insight into the workplace environment at the University of Alberta. Furthermore, although I myself come from an Anglo-Franco Canadian ethnocultural background, I have a keen interest in intercultural studies. As part of my Bachelor of Arts degree in French translation and Chinese language and literature, I studied in France for two years and in China for approximately eight months. In addition, experience gained while previously working at the International Centre and the Centre for International Education and Development on campus has further solidified my interest in the area of intercultural education.

Conceptual Framework

This study has been guided by the conceptual and theoretical issues and insights that have emerged within the Canadian and parallel multicultural contexts (e.g., USA, UK, Australia). The three primary fields which will be explored are: multiculturalism, human rights and human rights education, and employment equity.

Multiculturalism

Over the past few decades, the demographics of Canadian society have changed substantially. In the period between 1945 and 1970, the vast majority of immigrants who came to Canada were from the United Kingdom, Northern

Europe, Austria, Italy, Germany, Greece, France, Portugal, and the United States. However, since the 1970s, immigration sources have shifted, with more immigrants coming from Asia, South and Central America, the Caribbean and Africa. Thus, the proportion of visible minorities in Canada has substantially increased. Indications are that this trend will continue. It has also been suggested that increased immigration is necessary in order to maintain Canada's population and the social programs upon which Canadians have come to depend. "Given that the demographic patterns of our society are rapidly changing, and the fact that Canada's population will actually begin to decline by the year 2010 if immigration is not increased, one can safely assume that the racial/ethnocultural elements of our society will continue to grow" (Montgomery and McDonald, 1991, p. 2).

According to the report *Visible Minorities and the Federal Public Service* (1997a), which was commissioned by the Canadian Human Rights Commission, "visible minorities are an integral part of Canadian society. Their proportion in the labour force rose from 5.9% in 1986 to 9.1% in 1991, and [was] estimated to be about 12% in 1996." Thus, it is clear that learning how to successfully deal with diversity is crucial to the viability of Canada as a nation.

Acknowledging the increasing diversity within Canada, former Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau introduced the policy of Multiculturalism in 1971. Although the policy did not have any real legal authority, it sought to promote diversity, reduce discrimination and ensure that all ethnic minority groups would be able to fully participate within the institutions of Canadian society (Kallan, 1995).

Seventeen years later, after much pressure from the growing ethnic minority population, the federal government passed the Multiculturalism Act on July 16, 1988. The act was designed to encourage maintenance of cultural identity, reduce discrimination and promote institutional change that is sensitive to the needs of cultural minorities. An excerpt from the Act reads:

> The Government of Canada recognizes the diversity of Canadians as regards race, national or ethnic origin, color and religion as a fundamental characteristic of Canadian society and is committed to a policy of multiculturalism designed to preserve and enhance the multicultural heritage of Canadians while working to achieve the equality of all Canadians in the economic, social, cultural and political life of Canada.... (Elliott and Fleras, 1992, p. 279)

Ideally, the Multiculturalism Act should provide a vehicle through which the political interests of minority groups can be addressed. However, in many instances, the reality of the situation has not lived up to the rhetoric. When commenting on similar acts, policies and plans designed to promote human rights, the Canadian Human Rights Commission Annual Report for the year 1996 eloquently stated:

> Such fine rhetoric, however, does not substitute for specific actions. Canada's record as a committed proponent of human rights is only as convincing as its latest performance....Again, our moral authority is only as good as our own performance and readiness to stand behind our commitments. (Canadian Human Rights Commission, 1997b)

A detailed description of other initiatives undertaken by the federal government to further the goals of multiculturalism is provided in Chapter II.

As mentioned earlier, multiculturalism is understood differently by various peoples, groups, scholars and researchers. As detailed in Chapter II, literature on multiculturalism and multicultural education shows a range of perspectives and discourses that have been identified by scholars such as McLaren (1995), Sleeter (1996), and Fleras (1992). *Conservative multiculturalism*, *liberal multiculturalism* and *critical multiculturalism* are the three main perspectives which have been identified. However, as stated by McLaren (1995), it is important to remember that these are "ideal typical labels....In reality, the characteristics of each position tend to blend into each other....[One must be careful not to create] an overly abstract totality that dangerously reduces the complexities of the issues at stake" (p. 35).

According to McLaren (1995), *conservative multiculturalism* has its roots in colonial, imperialist and white supremacist ideology. Minorities, because they are seen as 'different' from the mainstream majority are considered to have 'culturally deprived' backgrounds or lack qualities such as strong family values. *Conservative multiculturalism* subscribes to the idea that minorities are somehow devoid of the supposedly superior traits held by the dominant or majority group. This serves as the rationale to explain why some minority groups are not successful. This thought pattern also provides the dominant or majority group with the excuse required to unreflectively and disproportionately monopolize positions of power (Fleras, 1992).

Conservative multiculturalism believes in the existence of a 'common culture' which disregards the different cultures that exist. One aspect of enforcing this 'common culture' involves "linguistic hegemony...[or] the articulation of signs and symbols which...codify and reinforce the dominant viewpoint" (McLaren, 1995, p. 37). 'Whiteness' is not seen as a type of ethnicity but rather as the norm against which others are judged. *Conservative multiculturalism* does not find it problematic that standards of achievement such as aptitude tests are based on the "cultural capital of the Anglo middle-class" (McLaren, 1995, p. 38). *Conservative multiculturalism* also fails to consider whose interests are being served by the current version of 'knowledge' or 'truth' and does not question the practices involved in preserving global dominance. *Conservative multiculturalism* views the world as a meritocracy and believes that with effort, everyone can succeed.

The paradigm of *liberal multiculturalism* believes in a natural equality among all human beings. Because everyone is seen as being equal, they can supposedly compete equally in a capitalist society. As such, it upholds the belief that society is a meritocracy in which the success of individuals is proportionate to their effort. Although it is believed that everyone is born equal, *liberal multiculturalism* does acknowledge the presence of economic, social and political inequality. It does not attribute this to 'cultural deprivation' but rather to an inequality in social and educational opportunities. It holds that with certain modifications, the existing cultural, social and economic inequalities can be altered or reformed so that relative equality can be achieved. *Liberal multiculturalism* tends to disregard the idea that difference is socially constructed by those who have the power to represent meanings (McLaren, 1995; Fleras, 1992).

In contrast to the conservative and liberal paradigms, *critical multiculturalism* believes that one of its central tasks is to transform "the social, cultural, and institutional relations in which meanings are generated" (McLaren, 1995, p. 42). It sees difference, identity and the idea of a 'common culture' as human constructs. *Critical multiculturalism* believes that the idea of a 'common culture' is a "defense against the real...demands that the articulation of cultural difference - the empowering of minorities - makes upon democratic pluralism....[It stresses] the importance of engaging on some occasions in dissensus in order to contest hegemonic forms of domination and to affirm differences" (McLaren, 1995, p. 44). *Critical multiculturalism* questions the rights of those who currently hold power and privilege. As McLaren (1995) explains, *critical multiculturalism* holds that justice does not already exist. It is continually being constructed and must be struggled for. This study adopts the perspective of *critical multiculturalism.*

The concept of cultural identity is integral to an understanding of multiculturalism and the issues addressed in this study. When analyzing identity, it is necessary to avoid essentialist definitions of cultural or racial groups. Homi Bhabha (1994) stresses the negative ramifications of our desire "to fix cultural difference in a containable, visible object. [Bhabha emphasizes that]...identity is never an a priori, nor finished product..." (pp. 50-51). He thus suggests that it would be useful to consider identity as having a 'hybrid' nature since the identity of every individual is informed by their interactions with others. Khayatt (1994) also emphasizes the importance of non-essentialist interpretations of cultural and racial identity.

> The assumptions implicit in the categories of 'immigrant woman,' 'woman of color,' and 'visible minority' conceal real differences in experience and do not account for or distinguish between the various levels of

> oppression. They assume a homogeneity of background amongst all people who fall into those various groupings. (p. 81)

It is also important to treat issues regarding race and ethnic identity "with the seriousness and complexity that they deserve, and refuse...to totally separate race from class, gender, sexuality and other relations" (Apple, 1993, p. ix). McCarthy and Crichlow (1993) caution that it is important not to articulate issues concerning culture and identity "in essentialist and exclusionary terms that ignore the historical and contemporary variability of race and the crucial roles of gender, class, sexuality and nation in the process of racial identity formation and structuration" (p. xvi). Ng (1993) stresses the importance of seeing race, gender and class in relational terms. If this relational character is not taken into consideration, then attempts at racial equality may only result in wealthy, male, heterosexual visible minorities being represented in the corporations and institutions of our society while those who are poor, female or homosexual become further marginalized.

Despite the efforts of governments and international organizations in the area of human rights, there continues to be evidence of interpersonal and systemic racism and discrimination against visible minorities throughout the world. As noted by Richmond (1994), the effects of "racism, ethnocentrism, religious bigotry, prejudice, nationalism and ancient rivalries" (p. xii) can be witnessed globally. Richmond insightfully notes that economic competition plays a major role in fueling many of the conflicts as "the economically privileged seek to protect their advantage while the absolutely and relatively deprived fight for their piece of the pie" (p. xii).

Evidence of racism and discrimination can also be found in Canada (Kivel, 1996; Alladin, 1996; Richmond, 1994; Alberta Human Rights and Citizenship Commission, 1997; Kallan, 1995; Elliott and Fleras, 1992). In 1996, the Supreme Court of Canada upheld a ruling which found Malcolm Ors, a math teacher from New Brunswick, guilty of making racist and discriminatory statements in written publications and on television (Canadian Human Rights Commission, 1997b). An article in the *Edmonton Journal* (March 20, 1997), told of how a human rights tribunal found that Health Canada discriminates against racial minorities. "It is the first time an entire federal department has been found to practice 'systemic' discrimination." Health Canada was found guilty of denying a scientist of South Asian origin promotions to director-level positions based on his ethnocultural background.

The Canadian Human Rights Commission also commissioned a study on the situation of visible minorities in the Federal Public Service. The report, which was published in 1997, revealed that despite representing 12% of the Canadian workforce, visible minorities only represent 4.1% of the employees in the Federal Public Service. The report identifies "elements in hiring practices and in the workplace environment that may help to explain the lack of representation of visible minorities" (Canadian Human Rights Commission, 1997a).

The 1996 Annual Report of the Canadian Human Rights Commission states, "racial or cultural discrimination impinges directly on the economic situation of the victims. Recent research findings on race/color-related wage gaps in Canada's major cities confirm that visible minorities earn significantly less than Canadian-born whites. The study also reveals that race/color-related wage discrimination is relatively uniform across Canada" (Canadian Human Rights Commission, 1997b).

The Concept of Human Rights

Perhaps one of the most significant developments in the history of human rights was the proclamation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights on December 10, 1948. This international document stressed that dignity and equal and inalienable rights were the birthright of every person throughout the world. The two covenants that followed the Universal Declaration of Human Rights outlined the specific civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights of individuals. Together these make up the International Bill of Rights (Eide, 1989). However, despite the existence of the above instruments, it is clear that the human rights of all individuals are not equally upheld. For example, the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of self and family is but one of the many rights denied to a large proportion of the world's population.

In order to uphold the rights of Canadian citizens, Canada has adopted several pieces of human rights legislation, including the Canadian Human Rights Act in 1978. This Act led to the creation of the Canadian Human Rights Commission. The Commission has been assigned the duty of ensuring that all individuals

> have equal opportunity to make for themselves the lives that they are able and wish to have...without being hindered or prevented from doing so by discriminatory practices based on race, national or ethnic origin, color, religion, age, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, family status, disability or conviction of an offense for which a pardon has been granted. (Canadian Human Rights Commission, 1997c)

The jurisdiction of the Canadian Human Rights Commission extends to "federal crown corporations (such as CN Rail, Canada Post), federal government departments, and any businesses in the federally regulated private sector such as chartered banks, airlines, railways, interprovincial transportation and trucking, broadcasting and telecommunications" (Alberta Human Rights and Citizenship Commission, 1997). Other important federal human rights-related instruments such as the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, will be elaborated upon in Chapter II.

At the provincial level, all Canadian provinces and territories have established human rights commissions in order to administer anti-discriminatory legislation. Each has enacted human rights codes which apply to jurisdictions which are not federally regulated, such as certain private businesses.

Non-governmental organizations also play an extremely important role in furthering the goals of human rights. By forming interest groups, mobilizing the public, organizing petitions and lobbying the government, they play an important advocacy or 'watch dog' role for the interests of specific groups.

Other strategies for the promotion of human rights include human rights education and antiracist education. The strategies of each movement are outlined below.

Human Rights Education

Human rights education seeks to develop in individuals a basic knowledge base regarding the evolution of human rights principles and the various human rights organizations. In addition to developing a general political literacy, it also seeks to develop a knowledge of the major human rights instruments. Human rights education also encourages individuals to acquire certain skills and values. These skills include but are not limited to critical thinking skills, effective communication skills, conflict resolution skills and actions skills. Some of the values it seeks to instill include but are not limited to self-respect, self-esteem and respect for others. Human rights education attempts to empower individuals to take responsibility for their world in an optimistic and hopeful manner by helping them to see their own capacity to make a difference. Proponents of human rights education believe that, in order for genuine human rights education to take place, the principles of human rights must permeate the entire ethos of institutions. Human rights education will be elaborated upon in greater depth in Chapter II.

Antiracist Education

The goals and principles of critical multiculturalism and human rights education are closely related to those of antiracist education. Antiracist educators assert that the unequal distribution of power is a central factor which needs to be addressed through antiracist education. Antiracist education is based on the belief that many well-meaning attempts to make institutions equitable for everyone have not been entirely successful because of their failure to deal with implicit, hidden and systemic issues and to challenge existing power relations.

Champions of antiracist education believe that education is, in the final analysis, about power. They therefore challenge the content and the processes of education which are based on the values and ideologies of dominant groups. Specific groups dominate because their members hold most of the positions of power and influence in important social institutions. Thus, the members of these groups create policies and procedures which tend to reflect their own values and predispositions.

There are two primary forms of antiracist strategy: one focuses on modifying individual behavior and attitudes, the other focuses on the elimination of discriminatory structural barriers through systemic or institutional restructuring.

The first form of antiracist strategy attempts to address individual attitudes and values and even unintentional dispositions. The following example of antiracist initiatives which address personal racism at a university campus is instructive.

> 'Personal' antiracism concentrates on behavior modification through education and training....Race-relations workshops for incoming students are proposed as part of their orientation. Faculty and administration, as well as support staff, are expected to receive ongoing training as part of their condition of permanent employment....[This is necessary because] "while most concur that minorities are disadvantaged, few understand the advantages of white privilege as the standard and ideal (McIntosh, 1988). Fewer still can appreciate how white privilege actively contributes to minority disadvantage. (Fleras, 1996, pp. 77-78)

This type of training also encourages people to take a stand when they encounter racism. Another facet of personal antiracism stresses the need for individuals to critically examine their own perceptions of specific minority groups. It is important to understand how it is that certain perceptions were formed. It is even more important to clearly see the relationship between those perceptions and the relationships we choose to enter into, our behavior, and our methods of communication.

Institutional antiracism, on the other hand, focuses on dismantling the structural basis of inequality. Policies, programs, values and practices are reassessed. The focus is on reinventing institutions so that they are more inclusive.

Both personal and institutional forms of antiracist education are effective when used in conjunction with each other; it is important to avoid placing more emphasis on one rather than another. Hence, it is important to avoid focusing solely on the personal model of racism because

> it leads us to focus on intentional racism so that we see racism as a fringe phenomenon in society, consisting mostly of the dramatic activities of

> groups like the National Front. The social model of racism, on the other hand, focuses on...certain routine practices, customs and procedures in our society whose consequence is that...[visible minorities] have poorer jobs, health, housing, education and life-choices than do the white majority, and less influence on the political and economic decisions which affect their lives....This web of discriminatory policies, practices and procedures is what is meant by the term 'institutional racism.' (Jones, 1985, p. 223)

Likewise, antiracist initiatives which focus only on institutional racism will not be entirely effective either. It can be problematic to begin totally dismantling contemporary bastions of tradition without attempting to address the attitudes and values of those who support them. Each of these strategies for antiracist education is not mutually exclusive. A successful antiracist educational program should include both. Thus, the goals and strategies associated with critical multiculturalism, human rights education and antiracist education can be seen as complimentary.

Employment Equity

The implementation of the Employment Equity Act in 1986 was one of the main human rights-related initiatives of the federal government designed to address the rights of minority groups. The Act provides legal authority to the concept of *employment equity* and focuses on ensuring that members of designated groups are represented in the workforce "in proportions similar to their representation in the appropriate local, provincial or national labour force" (University of Alberta, 1996, p. 27). As mentioned earlier, designated group members include women, visible minorities, Aboriginal people and persons with disabilities. Like critical multiculturalism, human rights education, and antiracist education, employment equity also focuses on challenging and eliminating interpersonal and systemic discrimination.

Employment equity policies have had a considerable impact on Canadian institutions and organizations, making them accountable for their hiring practices and overall employment environment. As a result, many federally regulated institutions have been required to develop employment equity plans and are monitored as to the progress they are making in implementing the plans.

As previously mentioned, many of the goals of employment equity are in keeping with the goals of human rights and critical multiculturalism. All three promote the provision of more equitable access to the economic, social and political structures of society. All three also support the right of visible minorities to maintain their cultural heritage and to be free of discrimination based on their ethnocultural background.

Conclusion

This study has been guided by the range of concepts and theoretical perspectives noted in this conceptual framework, including the concept of *critical multiculturalism,* which is portrayed as a more effective tool for dealing with ethnic inequality than the paradigms of *conservative* and *liberal multiculturalism*. The concept of *cultural identity* is discussed and the importance of avoiding essentialist notions of cultural and racial identity stressed. As noted by Bhabha (1994), the concept of *hybridity* is extremely useful, as it shows how the identity of an individual or group is not 'pure' but rather a result of complex interactions between self and others. The concept of *human rights* is elaborated upon through a discussion of the various international and national instruments which stress that dignity and equal and inalienable rights are the birthright of every individual. The concepts of *human rights education* and *antiracist education* are also introduced as educational movements which are attempting to address inequality. Lastly, the concept of *employment equity* is presented as a significant initiative designed to ensure that the rights of designated groups are respected within the workplace

Statement of the Research Problem

Since 1991, the University of Alberta has begun to create and implement employment equity policies. As noted in the introduction, the key document regarding employment equity at the University is *Opening Doors: A Plan for Employment Equity at the University of Alberta*, which seeks to "create a campus community in which all individuals are treated with equality and respect and all can reach their full potential" (University of Alberta, 1994, p. vii).

In keeping with the goals of *Opening Doors*, it is important to help formulate effective policies for all of the designated groups. I believe that research studies which can communicate the views of the four designated groups are vital. These studies can help to ensure that the policies created address the concerns of designated groups. Since a study involving all four designated groups would be beyond the scope of an M.Ed. thesis, and my area of interest is intercultural education, I chose to focus specifically on visible minority support staff.

The main goal of the study was to understand the views and perspectives held by visible minority support staff about their employment environment at the University of Alberta. By highlighting the perspectives and perceptions of visible minority support staff, it is hoped that this research can enhance the theory and practice of employment equity at the University of Alberta. As outlined below, this research problem can be articulated in terms of four dimensions related to issues of employment equity within the University setting.

1) The first section of the study focused on the employees' experiences at the University of Alberta in general as opposed to experiences within specific departments or units. It explored personal or interpersonal racism though questions regarding racial jokes, insults, graffiti, stereotyping, and whether or not visible minority employees feel that they have to work harder than their co-workers who are not members of visible minorities in order to receive the same recognition. This section also explored topics which may be related to systemic racism such as recognition of education received outside of Canada, accommodation of religious and cultural traditions, orientation procedures, and discrimination related to English language ability or accent. Employees' awareness of the University of Alberta's employment equity plan entitled *Opening Doors* was also explored.

2) The second section of the study focused primarily on discrimination related to ethnic or cultural background with respect to employment procedures. The focus of this section was on institutional policies and practices. Employment procedures examined included: recruitment and selection procedures, training and career development opportunities, promotion and advancement practices, and downsizing practices.

3) The third section of the study examined aspects of each employees' current position within a specific unit or department as differentiated from their overall impression of the University of Alberta. Topics included discrimination related to ethnic or cultural background with respect to treatment by supervisors and co-workers, and the performance review/evaluation process.

4) The last section of the study reflects participants' opinions as to whether they felt the University needs to make changes to create a more equitable employment environment for visible minority employees. If they felt change was necessary, participants suggested steps that the University of Alberta could take in order to create a more equitable environment for visible minority employees.

Thus, the study attempted to gain a comprehensive picture of the employment environment at the University as perceived by visible minority employees in support positions.

Significance of the Study

This project is significant because it is directly related to many of the objectives outlined in *Opening-Doors - A Plan For Employment Equity at the University of Alberta*. Objective 6.4 specifies that

> the Office of Human Rights, in conjunction with University researchers in the social sciences, should develop devices for better understanding the work climate of the University of Alberta as it is perceived by employees from each of the designated groups. The information gathered through the use of such devices should be made generally available to the campus in a way which protects the confidentiality of individual respondents. (p. 71)

Examination of current recruitment, evaluation, promotion and termination practices as experienced by designated group members is also a major focus of *Opening Doors*. This research project presents the opinions held by visible minority support staff regarding these topics. It is hoped that this research project can assist in furthering the objectives and goals of *Opening Doors* at the University of Alberta.

In 1990, at a national conference on racial equality in the workplace, one of the recommendations stressed that "attempts should be made to study the human side of systemic discrimination - by means of surveys [and] 'depth' interviews...in order to secure qualitative information that would facilitate dynamic, imaginative corrective actions" (Jain, Pitts and DeSantis, 1991, pp. 561-562). This is precisely what this research project has attempted to do. It is hoped that the issues raised and recommendations brought forth by the participants will contribute to the implementation of corrective measures where necessary.

This research project offers an opportunity to gain insight into the perceptions of visible minority employees in support positions at the University of Alberta. It is hoped that the knowledge gained will be utilized in the future to develop educational programs which could be used to disseminate the research findings to all University of Alberta employees as a starting place for discussion. It is also hoped that this research will contribute in a meaningful way to the creation of a curriculum that would address issues such as personal and systemic discrimination. Perhaps this curriculum could be utilized by the facilitators of the above mentioned educational programs.

Limitations of the Study

The sample of the study is limited as it includes only those persons who subjectively view themselves as visible minorities and who designated themselves as such on the Employment Equity Census administered by the Office of Human Rights. Although a definition of the term 'visible minority' was provided in the Census, identity is a complex issue and self-identification can be problematic. For example, some visible minorities who are wealthy, highly educated and have 'good' jobs may more readily identify themselves with the dominant mainstream group than with their 'minority' counterparts. An individual who does not *feel* like a visible minority may not identify himself or herself as such. Thus, self-identification may not be the most accurate method of identifying a sample group as it may result in under-reporting of the actual number of visible minority employees.

Furthermore, completion of the initial Employment Equity Census was completely voluntary, and there may have been some members of visible minorities who simply were not inclined to participate as the response rate was 86.6%. These points must be kept in mind when trying to determine the actual number of visible minority support staff on campus.

The study is also limited in that 89 out of 234 self-designated visible minority support staff chose to respond to the questionnaire and nine chose to participate in the interview process. Thus, the findings reflect the opinions of those visible minorities who actively chose to participate in the study.

A further limitation of the study is that it involved rather sensitive topic matter. When potential participants feel uncomfortable participating or are worried about confidentiality and anonymity, the chances that they will participate are reduced. Despite efforts to ensure potential participants of confidentiality and anonymity, this issue must be considered when discussing the limitations of such a study.

The study attempted to include *all* self-designated visible minorities in support positions. However, language barriers for certain visible minorities may have been problematic. Although efforts were made to tailor the questionnaire to people who speak English as a second language, these efforts may not have been sufficient. Visible minorities with limited English language skills may not have felt comfortable completing a questionnaire which required a certain level of English language comprehension as well as an ability to write in English. This may have also been true for the interviews which required an ability to verbally express oneself in English.

Data gathered by means of questionnaires and interviews is limited to information that a respondent or interviewee is able to recall. In certain circumstances, especially in the case of questions involving orientation, employees who had worked at the University for many years were unable to recall if they had ever attended an orientation. Thus, the study is limited to information that participants were able to remember.

Opinions of those (e.g., co-workers or supervisors) who are not visible minority employees were not requested and are therefore not presented. We should also keep in mind that the study is based on the subjective opinions of the participants, and presents their perceptions of reality. It is important to note that each individual has their own particular interpretation of truth or reality. However, this can be said of any statement made by any individual and it by no means questions the sincerity or validity of the opinions provided by the questionnaire respondents.

Lastly, despite the fact that many of the findings concur with the findings of other studies conducted regarding visible minority employees in the workplace such as Canadian Human Rights Commission, 1997a; Henry and Ginzberg, 1985; Billingsley and Muszynski, 1985, one must be cautious in trying to generalize the results of this study to all postsecondary educational institutions across Canada.

Organization of the Thesis

Chapter I introduces the conceptual framework and presents the readers with a conceptual 'map' to facilitate an understanding of the study. Chapter I also introduces the research problem, outlines the significance of the study and presents any limitations of the study.

Chapter II, the literature review, provides an overview of the theoretical and research background to the study. It focuses on three main bodies of literature which greatly inform the study: multiculturalism, human rights and human rights education, and employment equity.

Chapter III outlines the methodology utilized in completing the research project. A discussion of the qualitative and critical research assumptions and principles that guided the study is followed by a detailed description of the research sample, research instruments, and data collection processes. An account of the steps taken to ensure that ethical research procedures were followed is accompanied by a discussion of measures implemented to ensure reliability and validity.

Chapters IV and V present an analysis and interpretation of the research findings, while Chapter VI provides an analysis and interpretation of the recommendations. Chapter VII includes a summary of the key findings and recommendations for employment equity at the University of Alberta, which are supplemented with my own recommendations. This is followed by theoretical reflections about the study, a discussion of methodological issues and suggestions for further research.

Chapter II

Multiculturalism, Human Rights and Employment Equity

This chapter provides an overview of the theoretical and research background to the study which involved examining the employment environment at the University of Alberta as it is experienced by visible minority employees in support positions. In Canadian society, a sociological understanding of people referred to as 'visible minorities' relates centrally to the theory and practice of multiculturalism. Since the official policies of multiculturalism were designed and implemented over two decades ago, there has been considerable scholarly and popular debate and discourse over the meaning, desirability, and effectiveness of multiculturalism. A study with Canadian visible minorities as participants therefore needs to be conceptually informed by these discourses.

At the same time, the issues and problems which have emerged in terms of being a visible minority are increasingly related to the domain of human rights. As a country and society which takes a strong stand on the promotion of human rights, Canada has moral and legal responsibilities to protect and uphold the human rights of all Canadians. This chapter therefore also reviews the literature to draw relevant conceptual and theoretical insights for interpreting the rights of visible minorities in employment situations. In particular, the goals and strategies underpinning employment equity will be examined.

Multiculturalism

From the perspective of individuals who are members of visible minorities, the current climate in Canada has often been referred to as 'chilly' in more than one way. The voices of many minority group members have been and are being systematically silenced. The voices and interests of dominant groups often prevail at the expense of the voices and interests of minority groups. Despite initiatives taken to reduce the economic and political disparities among certain groups, there is evidence that the disparities have actually increased. In addition to the economic disparities faced by visible minorities, there have been blatant acts of discrimination. Events such as the standoff at Oka, the charges of racism leveled against police in Quebec and Ontario, and the racist research of psychology professor Phillipe Rushton all demonstrate that racism is alive and well in Canada.

Prior to World War II, as outlined in Elliott and Fleras (1992), Canada endorsed an assimilationist agenda which stressed conformity to majority group traditions and values. Cultural differences were dismissed as being incompatible with

Canada's goals as a nation. The increasing numbers of immigrants that began to arrive in Canada from the mid-1940's onward, forced Canada to re-evaluate its stance towards ethnic minorities. However, it was not until 1969 that the multicultural movement in Canada began to gain momentum. That year, the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism published a report which was perceived by many as relegating minority groups to second-class citizens. According to Kallan (1995), the report made reference to "an equal partnership between the 'two founding races' - a term which confuses race and culture - in reference to the English and French charter groups in Canada (Privy Council 1963: 1106)" (p. 211).

The Bilingualism and Biculturalism report did, however, make reference to "taking into account the contribution made by the other ethnic groups to the cultural enrichment of Canada" (Elliott and Fleras, 1992, p. 276). In 1971, in response to the recommendations of the report, the then Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau instituted a policy of multiculturalism but within a bilingual context. According to Elliott and Fleras (1992), the main goals were to:

> (a) cultivate diversity and ethnic identities without fear of discrimination or second-class treatment (b) foster full involvement of ethnic minorities in Canada's social and economic institutions (c) promote harmonious links with all sectors of society by defusing prejudice and discrimination at the interpersonal level [and] (d) encourage public awareness of and tolerance for ethnic differences (Boldt 1989). (pp. 276-277)

In 1973, the Canadian Consultative Council was established to assist the federal government in its multicultural goals. This council was restructured in 1980 and renamed the Canadian Ethnocultural Council. On July 16, 1988, the Multiculturalism Act was passed. "The Multiculturalism Act sought to promote cultures, reduce discrimination, and accelerate culturally sensitive institutional change" (Elliott and Fleras, 1992, p. 278). This was a significant event because it apparently accorded multicuturalism "full legal authority....[and] reaffirmed within a statutory framework what existed previously as de facto policy" (Elliott and Fleras, pp. 279 -280).

At first, multicultural policy tended to focus more on language and culture. Programs to preserve heritage languages and cultures were implemented. In 1975, as noted in Elliott and Fleras (1992), there began to be a shift away from language and culture. This was in reaction to minority demands for mechanisms to deal with racial discrimination. However, it was not until 1981 that the government instituted the race relations unit within the Multicultural Directorate and a national program to fight racism was implemented.

In the ensuing period, there was a growing demand by ethnic minority groups not only for improved race relations but for equality of opportunity which entailed the elimination of systemic barriers related to race and ethnicity such as those in education and employment. Minority groups became more concerned with issues relating to access to power and resources.

In May of 1990, the Federal Department of Multiculturalism and Citizenship was developed. However, its existence as a department would be short-lived. The following quote from Kallan (1995) is very telling.

> In an article in the *Toronto Star*, 'One final appeal for multiculturalism' (31 Aug. 1991), Andrew Cardozo, retiring Executive Director of the Canadian Ethnocultural Council, addressed the anti-multicutural forces at hand....Cardozo noted the following: "The Progressive Conservatives voted at their biennial convention this month to 'abandon the policy of multiculturalism and try and foster a common national identity'." The Spicer Commission (Citizens' Forum on Canada's Future) concluded after listening to more than 400,000 Canadians, that 'federal government funding for multicultural activities other than those serving immigrant orientation, reduction of racial discrimination and promotion of equality should be eliminated.' And the Reform Party (whose openly assimilationist policy would allow immigration only re: economic criteria) 'voted at its annual convention in April to end funding of the multicultural program and support the abolition of the Department of Multicuturalism'....In 1993, during Kim Campbell's brief reign as Prime Minister of Canada, the two-year-old Department of Multiculturalism and Citizenship was abolished....A new Canadian Heritage Ministry was established, which includes multiculturalism along with parks, culture, sports, official languages, and the status of women....The new Liberal government under Prime Minister Jean Chrétien, has kept this arrangement. (pp. 214-215)

As Kallan states, it is not surprising that the demotion of multiculturalism as a policy came at a time when minorities were making it clear that they were legitimate contenders in the competition for power and resources.

Implications of Multiculturalism for Institutional Programs

The implications of multiculturalism for popular practices and institutional programs have been significant. The need for institutions to adapt to changing demographic realties within Canada has become increasingly apparent. Efforts have been made to restructure Canadian institutions so that they are more representative, equitable and accessible. Multicultural policies and programs have been implemented in many institutions in Canada including the educational system, the criminal justice system, and the media. These changes have been implemented with the intention of making institutions better reflect the multicultural nature of Canadian society so that they can be accountable to all Canadians not just those in the dominant group.

Multiculturalism and the Educational System

With regard educational institutions, multiculturalism has resulted in the emergence of two key educational models, the enrichment model and the empowerment model as noted by Elliott and Fleras (1992) and Fleras (1992). The enrichment model of multicultural education focuses on improving multicultural awareness and appreciation. The existing curriculum is 'enriched' by adding units regarding various minority groups and their cultures. This type of multicultural education usually entails providing minority students who do not adapt as readily to the mainstream curriculum and educational ethos with 'compensatory assistance'. Instead of making structural changes to the educational system which would accommodate the needs of different minorities, inequities are supposedly addressed by providing forms of compensation to those who appear to be disfavored.

The empowerment model as noted by Elliott and Fleras (1992), contends that large-scale changes to educational institutions are necessary. The focus is on issues of power, decision-making, racism and exploitation of minorities. Proponents of this model believe that changes are necessary in the total school environment such as "policy, counselling programs, assessment and testing procedures, teaching methods and materials, formal courses of study, staff attitudes and expectations, the hidden curriculum, institutional norms, and community input and relations (Melnicer 1986)" (Fleras, 1992, p. 187). According to Elliott and Fleras (1992), the enrichment model is more readily accepted today because the empowerment model can be seen as more threatening or controversial in that it addresses the unequal power relations in society.

Multiculturalism and the Criminal Justice System

Multicultural policy has also had implications on the criminal justice system. It has been noted that there is an overrepresentation of certain minority groups i.e., as inmates within the criminal justice system. Tension between certain minority groups and the police has also been documented. As far as employment equity is concerned, the number of visible minority employees in positions such as police officers, judges, and parole officers has not been proportionate to their numbers in the Canadian workforce. In an effort to address these problems, programs relating to culturally sensitive training at all levels of the criminal justice system have been implemented. Efforts to respect the cultural needs of minority groups have, in some instances, resulted in inmates being able to practice some of their cultural traditions such as sweat lodges or the burning of sweet grass. Many of the proposed solutions focus on employing more visible minority police officers, guards, prison officials, parole officers, judges, and interpreters.

This approach has been criticized by Havemann (1994) as enhancing "the legitimacy of the official legal system while appearing to improve it." (p. 116) Havemann (1994) states that the "co-optation at an organizational level [and at the level] of front-line service delivery workers are the dominant integrative tactics...used as a form of pacification" (p. 112). LaPrarie (1994) states that there is a "need for the criminal justice system to redirect the issue to where it more properly belongs - the social, political and economic spheres" (p. 134). Again, the question is whether the change that has taken place to supposedly accommodate the needs of non-majority members of society has been effective or whether it has merely involved tinkering with the system while maintaining unequal power relations?

Multiculturalism and the Media

The media has also been affected by multicultural policy initiatives. It has been noted that issues that affect visible minorities have not received equal coverage by the media. In addition to inequities in media content, the percentage of visible minority journalists, news anchors and radio announcers has not been proportionate to their numbers in the Canadian workforce. Furthermore, when visible minorities have been portrayed in the media, there have been charges of racist stereotyping. According to Elliott and Fleras (1992), there have been measures taken to attempt to deal with these problems.

> Federal institutions such as the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC), the National Film Board, and the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC) have been instructed to implement programs and policies that reflect, reinforce, and promote our cultural diversity. Sanctions may be applied for non-compliance. The CRTC, for example, is empowered to withhold the broadcasting licenses of stations that fail to abide by the multicultural guidelines. (p. 298)

Despite the work of such groups as Media Watch which attempt to 'police' media for the problems noted above, much change still needs to be made before equity is reached with regard to visible minorities and the media.

Three Paradigms of Multiculturalism

> The concept of multiculturalism has revealed an uncanny ability to mean different things to different people throughout the world. Consensus is difficult to attain under these circumstances....Tension and ambiguity thus prevail in these pluralist contexts, as both political factions and minority

> sectors impute different definitions to multiculturalism and improvise lines of action consistent with their respective interests. (Elliott and Fleras, 1992, pp. 267-268)

Although there are diverse levels of meaning that can be attributed to the term multiculturalism, for our purposes it is useful to examine what can be viewed as the three major paradigms of multiculturalism. All three have conflicting views of what multiculturalism actually involves. As Fleras (1992) states "...we can envision [multiculturalism]...as a contested terrain that involves a struggle between competing groups with opposing ideologies..." (p. 207). For the purpose of clarity, it is useful to begin discussion with an overview of the three groups: *conservative multiculturalism*, *liberal multiculturalism* and *critical multiculturalism*. A brief critical assessment of all three forms of multiculturalism is provided in order to illustrate that the critical multicultural paradigm holds the most hope of actually addressing the problems of inequality faced by members of visible minorities.

Conservative Multiculturalism

Proponents of *conservative multiculturalism* largely believe that the current socioeconomic system is just and right. *Conservative multiculturalism* thus serves to provide justification for the current economic, political and social dominance of one group over others. According to McLaren (1995), minorities who are unsuccessful within what is perceived as a 'just' and 'fair meritocracy' may be charged with having 'culturally deprived backgrounds' or lacking a work ethic. Emphasis is also placed on valuing 'diversity' as long as this does not alter the current relations of power in society.

An example of such a conservative standpoint can be found in the writings of Dinesh D'Souza, a first generation immigrant to the United States who emigrated from Bombay, India in 1978. D'Souza (1995) claims that his "inclinations are strongly antiracist and sympathetic to minorities, [yet, he asserts that he is] not an uncritical cheerleader for every parade that carries the minority banner" (p. vii). Although he claims to be a 'walking embodiment' of multiculturalism, it is clear that he is firmly situated within the paradigm of *conservative multiculturalism*. Consistent with *conservative multiculturalism*, D'Souza's writings demonstrate that he views non-Western cultures to be generally 'deprived'.

> When scholars seriously examine the cultures of Asia, Africa, and Latin America, they cannot help but notice that these cultures are rudely inhospitable to the moral and political hopes of their Western admirers....Non-Western cultures have virtually no indigenous tradition of equality....[They are] even more bigoted and retrograde than those of the

> West [and]...would be worth studying, if only as horrible examples. (pp. 357-358)

Also consistent with *conservative multiculturalism*, D'Souza firmly believes in the superiority of Western culture. He denounces multicultural discourses that do not acknowledge this supposed superiority.

> ...multiculturalism becomes a technique for celebrating differences without making distinctions. Specifically, it forbids at the outset the possibility that one culture may be in crucial respects superior to another....Seeking to avoid an acknowledgment of Western cultural superiority, relativism ends up denying the possibility of truth. (p. 384)

D'Souza refers to structural change or employment equity initiatives as a new form of discrimination which "targets whites, specifically white males" (p. 291). He supports multiculturalism only if it is confined to the private realm and does not attempt to alter the public structures of society.

> Just as Jewish immigrants who in the early part of this century could give their children a yeshiva education, but at home or through privately subsidized institutions, so ethnic groups today should be encouraged to celebrate their own diverse identities without foisting them on others. (p. 548)

D'Souza even goes so far as to claim that the majority of immigrants or visible minorities do not desire economic, political and social equality. According to D'Souza, immigrants only desire token recognition of apolitical song and dance aspects of their culture. "The strident claims of some ethnic activists aside, most immigrants seem to want little more...than token recognition of their sartorial styles and folk festivals" (p. 549).

Another example of *conservative multiculturalism* can be found in an editorial in the Kitchenor-Waterloo Record which was printed on July 13, 1978.

> Canada is an accommodating country, and ethnic Canadians are free to keep alive their family's ethnic identity if they so wish. But they should do so by their private efforts, not expect governments to support attempts to counter the natural, nation-building process of integration and assimilation. (Fleras, 1992, p. 132)

Liberal Multiculturalism

Supporters of *liberal multiculturalism* place substantial emphasis on 'sameness'. They believe that 'we are all just people in the end.' Valuing diversity and cross-cultural understanding are also supported to a certain degree.

Champions of *liberal multiculturalism* believe that equality among all does not currently exist but it can be achieved with certain minor modifications to the present system which is considered to be, by and large, just and fair. Currently, this

> equality is absent...because social and educational opportunities do not exist that permit everyone to compete equally....[Proponents of *liberal multiculturalism*] believe that the existing cultural, social and economic constraints can be modified or 'reformed' in order for relative equality to be realized. (McLaren, 1995, p. 40)

An extension of *liberal multiculturalism* can be seen in the discourses of liberal multicultural education. Low levels of educational achievement experienced by certain immigrant or visible minority children are seen as stemming from their cultural background. This belief in the cultural deprivation of minority groups is consistent with the views of *conservative multiculturalism*. For supporters of *liberal multiculturalism*, however, a "remedial or compensatory assistance was targeted to achieve a level of adjustment and integration comparable with that of the general school population" (Fleras, 1992, p. 190). As Fleras (1992) notes, the role of educational institutions was to discover the 'problem' areas of immigrant students and apply corrective measures.

Such corrective or compensatory measures as noted by McCarthy and Crichlow (1993) involve attempts to influence positive changes in minority school performance through the manipulation of specific school variables such as teacher behavior, methods of testing, and counselling" (p. xviii). A supporter of *liberal multiculturalism*, E.D. Hirsch Jr., "claims broad cultural literacy would help the disadvantaged black youth enter the mainstream. Literacy in the canon of Western civilization would be the best antidote for failure among black poor" (McCarthy and Crichlow, 1993, p. xv).

Another example of such 'compensatory' measures is the addition of units about the dress, dance, dialect and diet of minority cultures (known as the 4-D approach) which is designed to compensate for the lack of information about minority cultures in the curriculum. This is supposed to improve the self-esteem of minority students and consequently encourage them to excel academically.

Critical Multiculturalism

Those who support *critical multiculturalism* believe that the systems and institutions that currently exist are not just and fair. The current system privileges one group at the expense of others. Proponents of *critical multiculturalism* believe that substantial change is required in order that the opportunity structure and allocation of rewards become equitable for all.

Critical multiculturalism is 'social reconstructionist' in nature because it believes firmly in social justice and the necessity of reconstructing certain institutions in order to make them more equitable. *Critical multiculturalism* does not conceive of diversity itself as the primary goal but rather argues that diversity must be attained while being committed to social justice. According to Sleeter (1996), "the material conditions with which oppressed groups struggle, in a context of unequal power relations, are a major focus on [sic] social justice movements" (p. 220). Critical multicultural education analyzes "extant power configurations and unsettle[s] them when such configurations serve to reproduce social relations of domination....[Critical multicultural pedagogy] defamiliarize[s] and make[s] remarkable what is often passed off as the ordinary, the mundane, the routine, and the banal" (Sleeter and McLaren, 1995, p. 7).

Proponents of *critical multiculturalism* find many aspects of *conservative* and *liberal multiculturalism* to be problematic because they cling to the myth of meritocracy and are thus unable to conceptualize the changes needed to make the existing system more equitable.

> *Conservative multiculturalism* wants to assimilate...[people] into an unjust social order by arguing that every member of every ethnic group can reap the economic benefits of neocolonialist ideologies and corresponding social and economic practices....It fails, in other words to interrogate dominant regimes of discourse and social and cultural practices that are implicated in global dominance.... (McLaren, 1995, p. 38)

As mentioned earlier, supporters of *liberal multiculturalism* place substantial emphasis on 'sameness' and believe that 'we are all just people in the end.' *Critical multiculturalism* does not approve of how *liberal multiculturalism* often dismisses difference rather than evaluating the role that 'difference' plays in the inequitable allocation of society's opportunities and rewards.

Valuing diversity and cross-cultural understanding are also supported by the proponents of *liberal multiculturalism*. However, a reevaluation of the institutions of society and the way in which they contribute to inequality among various groups is not seen as an integral part of this so-called 'valuing'.

Antiracist education which is a critical component of critical multicultural education does not accept the cultural deprivation theories espoused by conservative and liberal paradigms of multiculturalism. According to Fleras (1992), *critical multiculturalism*

> ...exposes inadequate explanations which attempt to justify and account for people's different positions in the society....It does not allow the examiner to dismiss such 'failure' as bad luck or inherent inferiority.

> Rather, anti-racist education highlights some of the human-made social structures and barriers which limit individuals and groups from improving their chances in life. Anti-racist education identifies the values which society has placed on people of different racial groups. It exposes the benefits which some derive from these evaluations, and the opportunities others have lost. (p. 196)

Proponents of *critical multiculturalism* believe that behind the attempts of liberal multiculturalism to 'compensate' immigrant children for their 'cultural deficiencies' lies the objectives of assimilation and conformity to the norms of the majority group. Kallan (1995) points out that

> instead of making structural changes in policy so as to equally or equitably accommodate the needs of different ethnic collectivities, Canadian bureaucrats and ideologues...tend to provide forms of 'compensation' for cultural minorities, especially for those of the lowest ethno-classes. (p. 57)

Fleras (1992) is also extremely critical of this approach not only for its compensatory nature but because it represents an

> ...extremely narrow application of the 'culture' concept. 'Culture' is often employed in the 'decorative' parlance of leisure, entertainment, food, and song and dance. Culture is described as if it were static, fixed in time, and suspended in a political vacuum. It is also depicted in highly objective terms, with little or no reference to intersubjective experience....Differences in age, gender, class, region of origin and political sympathies are all but ignored in the pursuit of explanatory models rooted in homogeneity. (p. 136)

It becomes apparent that the politics associated with ethnicity are being avoided by *liberal multiculturalm* as the emphasis is placed on superficial aspects of culture rather than on the structures of power.

Kivel (1996) is also critical of liberal compensatory programs such as "tutoring programs, scholarship funds, [and] special training programs [which he sees as not] address[ing] the systemic inequality between the educational opportunities of white students and students of color" (p. 189).

Proponents of critical multicutural education believe that racism and discrimination are concepts which are linked directly to the issue of power. As Khayatt (1994) states:

> Racism is not about colour, it is about power. Racism *is* power. It is not only a recognition of difference, but also the explicit emphasis on

> difference to mediate hierarchy based on color, ethnicity, language and race. (p. 83)

There is a system of privilege for a certain mainstream group and that group is able to maintain power through various ideologies which involve race. These ideologies are used to justify the allocation of much more economic, social and political power to one group at the expense of others.

The following definition of 'racial discrimination' from the United Nations' International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination is extremely useful because it makes reference to the political, economic, social and cultural ramifications of racism.

> The term 'racial discrimination' shall mean any distinction, exclusion, restriction or preference based on race, color, descent, or national or ethnic origin which has the purpose or effect of nullifying or impairing the recognition, enjoyment or exercise, on an equal footing, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural or any other field of public life. (Montgomery and McDonald, 1991, p. 8)

In order to understand the two primary categories of critical multicultural initiatives, it is necessary to understand the two primary classifications of racism. Racism can consist of personal or individual acts of discrimination which are directed at ethnocultural minorities or it can consist of systemic or institutional barriers which appear to be neutral but have the effect of excluding those who are different from majority members of society. Systemic racism

> is the name given to this subtle, yet powerful form of discrimination which is entrenched within the institutional framework of society. With systemic racism, it is not the intent which counts but rather the *consequence*. Policies, rules, priorities, and programs may not be inherently racist or discriminatory in intent. However, they may have a discriminatory effect in that they exclude certain groups from access to equality. We can define systemic racism as the adverse impact of an apparently neutral law or program upon those minorities whose cultural values and social circumstances are at variance with the mainstream (Report, Solicitor-General of Canada, 1988). (Elliott and Fleras, 1992, p. 64)

Recently, more emphasis has been placed on systemic discrimination rather than personal discrimination. This is so because we are beginning to realize the insidious power of institutional norms which, while appearing to be neutral, have negative consequences for certain groups. As Kivel (1996) notes, dominant or mainstream members of society

> no longer need to overtly discriminate against people of color to maintain a racial hierarchy. Because of the vast disparities of wealth, power and privilege, and the historical injustices upon which that wealth and power is built, we cannot rely on neutral legal remedies, on bans against overt acts of discrimination, or on individual white people unlearning prejudice as a sufficient means to overcome racism - although these are all important. Racism is self-sustaining. It can allow white people to be friendly to people of color...and still collude with institutional policies that continue racial injustice. (pp. 161-162)

Thus, focusing on systemic discrimination allows for a clearer understanding of the relationship between racial discrimination, power and domination.

Proponents of critical multicultural education stress that it is necessary to have a clear understanding of concept of ethnocentrism and be cognizant of the fact that prejudice and discrimination not only occur between white and non-white groups. These problems also exist between the various visible and non-visible minority and Aboriginal groups. Kallan (1995) describes ethnocentrism as

> the ubiquitous tendency to view all the peoples and cultures of the world from the central vantage point of one's own particular ethnic group and, consequently, to evaluate and rank all outsiders in terms of one's own particular cultural standards and values. From an ethnocentric perspective, the traditions, customs, beliefs, and practices which make up the culture of one's own ethnic group are exalted as highest and most natural. (p. 41)

Roberts and Clifton (1990), note that "different ethnic groups are bound to relate to surrounding society, including other ethnic groups in fundamentally different ways" (p. 132). One of these 'different ways' can include ethnocentrism which can not only be expressed by white groups toward non-white groups but also by and between different non-white groups. However, it is important to recognize that the impact of ethnocentrism of course depends upon the power of the group which holds ethnocentric attitudes.

Because critical multicultural education directly addresses the issue of power, it is profoundly political. After people become aware of the need for change, critical multicultural education encourages supporters to take collective political action to make change happen. Expanding one's knowledge of politics and political systems and finding ways to access and affect these systems is essential.

One of the key components of critical multicutural education calls for critical self-reflection and self-evaluation. Rather than trying to 'convert' others, it is necessary to undergo a process of 'conscientization' - to become aware of the injustices around us and of our role in perpetuating those injustices. But, as renowned Brazilian human rights educator Paolo Friere believes:

> Self-reflection alone - even if it is inimicably [sic] opposed to all forms of domination and oppression - is only a necessary but not nearly sufficient condition for emancipation. This process must go hand-in-hand with changes in the material and social conditions through counter-hegemonic action (Hammer and McLaren 1991;1992). (McLaren, 1995, p. 54)

Another major component of critical multicultural education involves the change process itself. Change must not come about through a process whereby the members of the dominant group are all-controlling. The voices of each and every group must be heard and members of dominant groups must be willing to 'take a back seat' so that others will have the opportunity to contribute. The change process should not be viewed as a benevolent act. Sleeter (1996) stresses the need to move beyond the 'how *we* can help *them'* mentality. Instead, *collective* political strategies for change need to be devised (p. 136).

The quote below by Fleras (1992) aptly summarizes the standpoint of *critical multiculturalism*.

> The days are gone when diversity could be pushed to the margins of society, and defined as a quaint but irrelevant contributor to Canadian nation-building. What we have instead is a perception of diversity as a legitimate and integral player in the Canadian stakes. (p. 143)

Critical multiculturalism has also increasingly engaged with postmodern and post-colonial discourses on race, ethnicity, and cultural identity. Postmodern theorists are concerned with how language, socioeconomic interests and power are interconnected. Signs or language are seen as "part of an ideological struggle that attempts to create a particular regime of representation that serves to legitimate a certain cultural reality" (McLaren, 1995, p. 45). Accordingly, it is necessary to question the ideological interests behind meaning or discourse. Foucault, one of the key postmodern theorists, "emphasized the centrality of discourse as a representation of power....The discourse of those in power seeks as one of its primary functions the prevention of any challenge to its authority" (Allsup, 1995, p. 273). Hence, Foucault asserts that all theory is a form of power and must be subjected to frank and ongoing critique. Even the paradigm of *critical multicuturalism* should be subjected to critique.

Postmodern theorizing stresses that we must question how 'difference' is constructed and who is constructing it. It is necessary to understand that it is an act of power to define 'difference' and to be able to name 'the other'.

> Critical pedagogy has accomplished in more recent years a more detailed understanding of the production and disarticulation of...people of color as the abjected 'other' (*les autres*) through processes of ideological differentiation against invisible cultural markers consisting of Eurocentric, Anglocentric and patriarchal assumptions and practices. (Sleeter and McLaren, 1995, p. 15)

There are many examples of how dominant groups have taken it upon themselves to name the 'abnormal' as compared to the 'normal'. Many talk of whiteness as if it were the norm. Distinctions have been made between those who are 'white' and 'people of color.' Postmodern theorists question why whiteness is considered as the norm and why 'white' is not considered to be a color? Roman (1993) critiques this way of thinking:

> ...the phrase 'people of color' still implies that white culture is the *hidden norm* against which all other racially subordinate groups' so-called 'differences' are measured....At the same time, it can be used to imply that whites are *colorless*, and hence without racial subjectivities, interests, and privileges. (p. 71)

The distinction between 'white' people and those who constitute members of 'ethnic' groups is also challenged by postmodern thinkers. They question why being white is not considered as a form of ethnicity? McLaren (1995) stresses that we should not "naturalize whiteness as a cultural marker against which otherness is defined....To ignore white ethnicity is to redouble its hegemony by naturalizing it" (p. 50). It is seen as problematic that many white people believe they do not have a culture and that only 'other' groups have a culture. This phenomenon exposes an assumption on the part of many white people that their experience is devoid of culture and thus the 'norm' or 'neutral.'

Consistent with postmodern concerns with language and the power of those who define 'others', the label 'visible minority,' as used in the discourse of employment equity, has been a source of controversy. Certain theorists feel that the concept 'visible minority' is not well-formulated. Synnott and Howes (1996) believe that the concept "may be seen as further entrenching difference by 'racializing' divisions which...have always had more to do with social class and cultural beliefs than with skin color or 'visibility'" (p. 138). These authors stress that some ethnic minorities are visible and some are not. They stress that we must thus be careful of protecting the rights of visible ethnic minorities while neglecting the rights of religious or linguistic minorities. Furthermore, Synnott and Howes (1996) state that some visible minorities as a group experience far greater discrimination than other visible minorities and lumping such a diverse group together may prove problematic.

Synnott and Howes (1996) clarify that "identity is not such much a matter of pigmentation as of politics...[and] power is indeed a central element in the definitional process" (pp. 143 and 147). In the final analysis, they critique the term 'visible minority' because they feel it tries to legalize the concept of racial difference rather than seeing it as a socially constructed category.

> Racism is ultimately about power and the legitimation of power differentials, as well as the legitimation of actions and attitudes necessary or useful to maintain (or challenge) a given racial or ethnic power system. Nonetheless, by talking about race in terms of color, the government may actually institutionalize biological reductionism and effectively recognize racism. Racial difference on grounds of color then becomes a legal category rather than a social one. (Synnott and Howes, 1996, p. 155)

Although the point of Synnott and Howes is well-taken, it is important to note that in practice, the definition of the term 'visible minority' is not limited to factors related to 'race' or to being perceived as visibly distinct by *others*. Employment equity discourse allows for those who identify personally with the group 'visible minorities' to indicate that they are a visible minority. This is true even though they may not be perceived of as being visibly distinct by others. For example, if an employee perceives that he or she is a visible minority and indicates this to an employer, they are then considered to be a visible minority. Hence, non-visible minorities such as religious or linguistic minorities could designate themselves as being a visible minority. In this sense, employment equity would not be seen as neglecting the rights of certain groups. However, the popular definition of employment equity as it is understood by many - as being strictly related to those who are non-Caucasian or non-white - may result in some non-visible minorities refraining from designating themselves as visible minorities. Hence, it is clear that self-designation appears to be more linked to self-perception than to adhering to a strict definition which is set by others.

Haymes (1995) elaborates on the points raised by Synnott and Howes. He contends that when "the focus is on the...[visible minority] other and not on whiteness and white people, [it is] a selective move designed to conveniently avoid the issue of white power and privilege" (p. 111). Synnott and Howes (1996) concur and state that

> the phrase 'visible minority' perpetuates white supremacy by deflecting attention from the centre. The centre is elusive, silent, and strangely invisible, yet exerts a real, undeniable power over the whole social framework of our culture (Ferguson, 1990:9). (p. 153)

This denial of white power and privilege is also frequently accompanied by a denial of the existence of racism by white people. Kivel (1996) acknowledges that "all too often people who are proponents of multiculturalism refuse to acknowledge or address the devastating effects of racism..." (p. 211). He has aptly documented the forms that this denial can take. People have been heard to say:

> 'It's a level playing field.' 'Discrimination is thing of the past.' 'This is a land of equal opportunity.'...'Personal achievement mostly depends on personal ability.'...'They are immoral, lazy dumb or unambitious.'...'Anybody can be prejudiced.' 'People of color can attack white people too.'...'Discrimination may happen, but most people are well intentioned.'...'It was only a joke.' 'It's only a few people like that - it is not systemic or institutionalized.'...'Housing and job discrimination are the result of a few bigoted people.' 'The far right is behind the scapegoating of immigrants.' 'It's only neo-Nazis and Skinheads who do that sort of thing.'...'We want our rights too.'...'They're taking away our jobs.' 'White males have rights too.' 'I have it just as bad as anybody.' And, 'White people are under attack.' (pp. 41-46)

Many postmodernists and postcolonialists believe that the ideologies created by dominant groups have resulted in the treatment of certain individuals and groups as infants. Those in power have attempted to speak *for* 'the other' as a way of acknowledging the other's presence without having to relinquish power. The 'other' has been patronized and objectified by those who have power. In the process, minorities have been forbidden to define their own identity. In *Orientalism Reconsidered*, Edward Said (1993) discusses just such themes. Said defends

> the right of formerly un- or mis-represented human groups to speak for and represent themselves in domains defined, politically and intellectually, as normally excluding them, usurping their signifying and representing functions, overriding their historical reality. (p. 3)

Said (1993) vehemently expresses his desire that the orient no longer "be confined to the fixed status of an object frozen once and for all in time by the gaze of western percipients.... [and challenges] the muteness imposed upon the Orient as object" (p. 4). Haymes (1995) echoes Said's beliefs and states that "mainstream white cultural authority imposes structures of meaning on...[minority] narratives, consequently regulating how...[minorities] come to know who they are..." (p. 110).

At a national conference on racial equality in the workplace, a member of the media spoke eloquently about how the 'other' is treated by mainstream society.

> When it comes to visible minorities, we keep this cultural 'other' largely disenfranchised, giving them no place in the information explosion....They

> remain mired in stereotypes, intellectually segregated from public discourse....(Siddiqui, 1990, p. 178)

It is thus necessary to try and intervene in the power relations which currently construct 'identity', 'norms,' and 'difference'. It is important to try to challenge the social and cultural systems through which 'meaning' is created.

Identity formation is another important aspect of postmodern discourse. Identity formation involves the way individuals view themselves and how others view and interact with them on the basis of race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, class and so forth. As McCarthy and Crichlow (1993) state "issues of identity and representation directly raise questions about who has the power to define whom, and when, and how" (p. xvi). Those who have the power to define others have tended to define them in essentialist ways which involve

> treat[ing] social groups as stable, homogeneous entities. Racial groups such as 'Asians,' 'Latinos,' or 'blacks' are therefore discussed as though members of these groups possessed some innate and invariant set of characteristics that set them apart fro each other and from 'whites.' (McCarthy and Crichlow, 1993, p. xviii)

Kivel (1996) emphasizes that "such homogeneous groups with clearly defined agendas do not exist" (p. 214). He stresses that an individual of Korean descent cannot speak for all Koreans any more than they can speak for Asians or people of color. Omi and Winnant (1993) also denounce the essentialist notions which are used to confine vastly different people in the United States into strict categories.

> This is problematic, indeed ridiculous, in numerous ways. Nobody really belongs in...boxes; they are patently absurd reductions of human variation....There is in these approaches an insufficient appreciation of the performative aspect of race, as postmodernists might call it....It cannot grasp the process-oriented and relational character of racial identity and racial meaning [and]...it denies the historicity and social comprehensiveness of the race concept. (p. 6)

Many other theorists stress the relational character of identity. Rizvi (1993) outlines Stuart Hall's stance on this issue.

> Hall refuses to accept any idea of a pregiven, unified ideological subject, with a coherent set of ideas constituting his or her consciousness. Rather he suggests that consciousness is not an individual but relational, collective phenomenon, located in practices. He cites approvingly Gramsci's observation in Prison Notebooks that 'the personality is strangely composite.' (p. 130)

The relational nature of identity and culture is elaborated upon by Fay (1996) who believes the notion of a 'pure' culture or identity uninfluenced by others is a myth. He also stresses the role that power can play in the interaction between different individuals or 'cultures.'

> Cultures are better conceived as interactive zones of activity than as individual things....Cultural and social interaction involves complex patterns of appropriation and negotiation among groups which differ as to their power. (p. 231)

The 'hybridity' of identity, culture and race is a concept that has been stressed in the writings of Homi Bhabha. In his work *The Location of Culture* (1994), he emphasizes "the impossibility of claiming an origin for the Self (or Other) within a tradition of representation that conceives of identity as the satisfaction of a totalizing, plenetudinous object of vision" (p. 46). Homi Bhabha elaborates on the theory of 'hybridity' below:

> ...hybridity acknowledg[es] that all cultural specificity is belated....This erases any essentialist claims for the inherent authenticity or purity of cultures which, when inscribed in the naturalistic sign of symbolic consciousness frequently become political arguments for the hierarchy and ascendancy of powerful cultures. (p. 58)

Edward Said (1993) supports Bhabha's notion of hybridity.

> ...we have never been as aware as we are now of how oddly hybrid historical and cultural experiences are....Far from being unitary or monolithic or autonomous things, cultures actually assume more 'foreign' elements, alterities, differences, than they consciously exclude. (p. 115)

When attempting to acknowledge the multivariate elements that contribute to ethnocultural identity, it is important to acknowledge the historicity of identity. Said (1993) acknowledges the intersection and reflexivity between past and present and the role that this has on identity. He affirms that "there is no just way in which the past can be quarantined from the present. Past and present inform each other...each co-exists with the other" (p. 4). Apple (1993), paraphrasing the ideas of Omi and Winnant and Hall, also acknowledges the historical nature of ethnocultural identity.

> Race is not a stable category....Race is a set of fully social relations (Omi and Winnant, 1986). Much the same needs to be said about identity. It is not necessarily a stable, permanent united centre that gives consistent meaning to our lives. It too is socially and historically constructed, and subject to political tensions and contradictions (Hall, 1992). (p. vii)

Thus, as part of an effort to assume anti-essentialist notions of identity, it is important to realize the intersection and interaction between various ethnocultures and identities as well as the intersection and interaction of the past, the present, and the future. A further aspect of this non-essentialist conception involves acknowledging the intersection ethnicity, class, sex, and sexual orientation in identity formation. As Khayatt (1994) states:

> The formation of my identity includes my class, my color, my ethnicity, my sex, my sexuality and my religion....Other elements which are as important are variable, their relevance modified by changes in personal politics, circumstances, age, career, current ideologies, [and] the general political climate. (pp. 85-86)

Ng (1993) addresses the fact that "studies of race and ethnic relations have by and large ignored class and gender as essential constituents of the structuring of these relations" (p. 50). Hall, quoted by McCarthy and Crichlow (1993) notes that "one cannot understand racial inequality by studying race alone (Hall, 1981)" (p. xxvii). West (1993) calls upon present day theorists to resist the "homogenizing impulse that assume[s] that all black people [are] really alike - hence obliterating differences (class, gender, region, sexual orientation) between black people" (p. 18). This point is crucial to the study of racial inequality. If we do not examine such issues as gender and class in conjunction with race we may bring about a facade of equity while really perpetuating inequality. There may be an increase in the number of middle or upper class, male, heterosexual visible minorities in certain occupational categories but this does not address the problems that would still be faced by visible minorities who are poor, female or homosexual. Kivel (1996) elaborates upon this point.

> Unequal distribution of wealth is a keystone of racism. We haven't achieved much if we produce a multicultural ruling class. Our government, large corporations and other institutions are capable of becoming multicultural while continuing to exploit the majority of us....We might bring only middle or upper class people of color into the organizations we are involved with, and this will do little to redress the unequal participation of broad groups of poor and working class people of color....Multiculturalism without attention to issues of wealth and power [and gender and sexual orientation] can become a collusion among professionals, both white and of color... to benefit themselves. (p. 213)

Thus, it is important when studying racial inequality to avoid linear and monocausal models or explanations that retreat from an exploration of the various factors which inform identity such as ethnicity, class, gender and sexual orientation (McCarthy and Crichlow, 1993).

Despite its contributions to critical multicultural education, aspects of postmodern theory as outlined above have also been severely criticized for being directed primarily at a specific audience of white, male intellectuals who are in positions of power. The following critique from bel hooks is very telling:

> I find myself on the outside of the discourse looking in. As a discursive practice it [postmodernism] is dominated primarily by the voices of white, male, intellectuals and/or academic elites who speak to and about one another with coded familiarity....I appreciate it but feel little inclination to ally myself with the academic hierarchy and exclusivity pervasive in its movement today (1990, p. 24). (Allsup, 1995, p. 276)

However, in the final analysis, postmodern discourse does inform critical multiculturalism because it holds that there are no 'master narratives', no 'supreme truths,' and no 'absolute knowledge.' 'Reality,' 'truth,' and 'knowledge' are the result of a struggle for power between different subjective positions. It also informs critical multiculturalism in that it stresses the hybridity of identity and the dangers of essentialist notions of ethnocultural identity. Hence, an understanding of postmodern discourse is fundamental to any attempt to create truly multicultural society because it acknowledges the need to make legitimate multiple traditions of identity, truth and knowledge.

Because one of the primary tenets of *critical multiculturalism* is that the human rights of all individuals and groups must be upheld, it is important to locate *critical multiculturalism* within the larger struggle for human rights. The next section of this chapter will provide an overview of the important issues involved in a discussion of human rights and human rights education.

Human Rights

On December 10, 1948, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights *was* proclaimed by the United Nations. It was instituted in reaction to the atrocities of World War II in the hope that such grievous human rights violations could be avoided in the future. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights opens with the words: "Whereas recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world..." (King and Flitterman King, 1982, p. 61). Human rights are defined as rights which are inalienable and which are "the birthright of every person, because each man, woman, and child has inherent dignity and each is a member of the human family" (Stimmann Branson, 1982, p. 8).

Although the Universal Declaration of Human Rights has set a "common standard of achievement for all peoples and all nations" (Stimmann Branson, 1982, p. 12), it is only a declaration of intent with no legal power. Two subsequent documents, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights include legal mechanisms to ensure that rights are respected by those countries which have ratified the covenants.

The rights outlined in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights are meant to protect the individual against the abuse of political authority. These rights include, among others, the right to freedom of movement and residence; the right to participate in government elections; the right to own property; the right to a fair and public trial; freedom of thought conscience and religion; freedom of opinion and expression; freedom of peaceful assembly; freedom from slavery or involuntary servitude; freedom from torture and from cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment or punishment and freedom from racial discrimination.

The rights delineated in the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights necessitate the intervention of the state in order to ensure equity in such areas as distribution of resources. Examples of economic and social rights include: the right to social security; the right to work and protection against unemployment; the right to rest and leisure including periodic holidays with pay; the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of self and family and the right to education. As outlined by Kallan (1995), cultural rights can be explained as the right to enjoy one's own culture, to profess and practice one's own religion, to use one's own language and to express any other distinctive cultural characteristics (p.3).

Following the institution of the Universal Declaration and the two covenants (both of which Canada has ratified), there were several international instruments created specifically to prevent racial discrimination. One is entitled the United Nations Declaration on the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination (UNDEAFRD*)* and the other the International Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICEAFRD). Both are significant to the area of employment equity because "article 2.3 (UNDEAFRD) and article 1.4 (ICEAFRD) allow special measures of affirmative action designed to redress past systemic discrimination for the sole purpose of securing adequate advancement of disadvantaged racial and ethnic minorities (UN 1978:24-5)" (Kallan, 1995, p. 5).

Another international instrument noted by Kallan (1995) is the Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities, which was adopted in 1992. Any state that ratifies this document must make a commitment to protect the collective cultural rights of minorities (p. 3).

Countries which ratify international human rights instruments must ensure that the rights outlined in the instruments are respected in their countries. To do so, Canada has attempted to create parallel national human rights instruments. The steps that Canada has taken to honor this obligation are noble, however many critics would contend that there is still much left to be achieved. When evaluating Canada's human rights instruments, the 1994 report *Equal in Dignity and Rights* by the Alberta Human Rights Commission states

> in retrospect, Canada's elaborate system of human rights protection is in its infancy and is, by and large, grafted onto a society which continues to stigmatize difference....The proactive implementation of effective human rights protection is a necessary, but only a first, step toward the eradication of discrimination in Canada. (1994, p. 24)

The following is an outline of some of the major pieces of domestic legislation in chronological order.

In 1960, Prime Minster John Diefenbaker introduced the Canadian Bill of Rights which

> 'reflected a growing concern that an expanding modern government should respect the rights of those it was trying to serve.' However, the Bill was limited in construction and not constitutionally entrenched, and because there was judicial confusion about its role as a statute, it was always given a narrow, conservative interpretation. (Alberta Human Rights Commission, 1994, p. 23)

As far as provincial legislation is concerned, the provinces of Ontario and Saskatchewan enacted the first provincial statues in the 1940s which declared certain racist practices to be illegal. According to Kallan (1995), the Ontario Act

> prohibited only the public display of signs, symbols, or other racially or religiously discriminatory representations. The Saskatchewan Bill was much broader [in that its] anti-discrimination provisions applied to accommodation, employment, occupation, land transactions, and business enterprises, and included the government. (p. 229)

Since the 1960's each province has enacted Human Rights Codes which apply to jurisdictions which are not federally regulated. In Alberta, for example, "most businesses (80-90%)...are under the jurisdiction of the Alberta Human Rights, Citizenship and Multiculturalism Act" (Alberta Human Rights and Citizenship Commission, 1997). By 1975, all Canadian provinces had established Human Rights Commissions in order to administer anti-discriminatory legislation. It is important to note that from province to province "there are significant differences in detail among current human rights statutes in the enumerated non-discriminatory grounds, areas of application and so forth" (Kallan, 1995, p. 232). For example, Alberta and Prince Edward Island have not yet added sexual orientation to their list of grounds upon which discrimination is prohibited while all other provinces in Canada have. According to Kallan (1995),

> the statutes are designed to ensure equality of access to places, activities, and opportunities. Accordingly, they all prohibit discrimination in hiring, terms and conditions of employment, job advertisements, job referrals by employment agencies, and membership in unions. Most also prohibit discrimination in professional, business and trade organizations. (p. 232)

In 1978 the Canadian Human Rights Act was implemented. The purpose of the Canadian Human Rights Act as outlined in the Canadian Human Rights Commission website is

> to extend the laws in Canada to give effect, within the purview of matters coming within the legislative authority of parliament, to the principle that all individuals should have equal opportunity to make for themselves the lives that they are able and wish to have, consistent with their duties and obligations as members of society, without being hindered in or prevented from doing so by discriminatory practices based on race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, age, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, family status, disability or conviction for an offense for which a pardon has been granted. (Canadian Human Rights Commission, 1997c)

One of the main outcomes of The Canadian Human Rights Act was the establishment of the Canadian Human Rights Commission. The jurisdiction of the Canadian Human Rights Commission extends to "federal crown corporations (such as CN Rail, Canada Post), federal government departments and any businesses in the federally regulated private sector such as chartered banks, airlines, railways, interprovincial transportation and trucking, broadcasting and telecommunications" (Alberta Human Rights and Citizenship Commission, 1997). The Canadian Human Rights Commission has three main objectives:

> to promote knowledge of human rights in Canada and to encourage people to follow principles of equality; to provide effective and timely means for resolving individual complaints; and to help reduce barriers to equality in employment and access to services. (Canadian Human Rights Commission, 1997c)

However, as pointed out by Kallan (1995), the commission is under-funded and is suffering from a severe backlog of cases. Criticism has also been lodged against the Commission because its procedures tend to focus more on addressing individual complaints rather than on resolving systemic group-based inequalities (p. 234). Because much of the focus of employment equity is on systemic discrimination rather than on individual acts of discrimination, the current focus of the Canadian Human Rights Commission is considered by some (Fleras, 1992; Kallan, 1995) to be rather ineffective.

In 1982, when Canada was amending its Constitution, the Charter of Rights and Freedoms was enacted. The Charter "governs the actions of governments, while the provincial statues also address discrimination between individuals" (Alberta Human Rights Commission, 1994, p. 24). Prior to 1982, the only constitutional document that existed was the Constitution Act of 1867 which acknowledged the superior status of English (Protestant) and French (Catholic) people as the charter groups of Canada. The only ethnic minorities which were mentioned were the Aboriginal Nations which were, according to Kallan (1995), "lumped together under the racist rubric Indians" (p. 251). Thus, ethnic groups that had immigrated to Canada since 1867 were without constitutional provisions for their special status. These groups saw the constitutional entrenchment of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms as an opportunity to address their issues and goals.

Kallan (1995) questions whether the Charter is "truly an egalitarian human rights instrument, or [whether] it [is] informed by established ethnic and non-ethnic group priorities which serve to render some categories of Canadians *more equal* than others" (p. 252)? Kallan notes that there are positive and specified protections afforded for clearly defined English and French language and educational rights, and religious denominational education rights of Protestant and Catholic religious groups. However, there are no parallel protections for the collective linguistic and religious rights of multicultural and Aboriginal minorities. By neither specifying nor defining the linguistic rights of minorities, Section 22 of the Charter only provides vague, negative protection for non-official languages. Although the 'multicultural heritage' of Canadians is mentioned in Section 27, Kallan feels that the vagueness of the provision leaves its interpretation entirely in the hands of the court. Despite this, Section 27 still represents for minority groups a symbolic guarantee of their multicultural rights.

Another aspect of the Charter which is appropriate to this study is Section 15 which prohibits discrimination on the grounds of race and ethnicity. Section 15(2) is a specific area of the Charter which is relevant to employment equity.

> Constitutional provision for affirmative action under section 15(2) of the Charter has provided the catalyst for parallel, statutory legislation allowing affirmative remedies against the collective adverse impact of systemic discrimination for disadvantaged racial and ethnic minorities. (Kallan, 1995, p. 6)

Apparently this subsection of the Charter was added to ensure that affirmative action programs would not be contested.

The provincial and federal legislation outlined above is notable because it integrates the principles of human rights developed internationally into the national and local level. Other important federal human rights instruments such as the Employment Equity Act will be discussed later in this chapter when an in-depth discussion of Employment Equity is undertaken.

Although a detailed discussion of human rights as they relate to employment equity is found later in this chapter, at this point it is useful to introduce certain concepts which relate to human rights. As mentioned earlier, human rights can be categorized into two main groupings 1) civil and political rights and 2) economic, social and cultural rights. The categories that are perhaps most associated with employment equity are economic, social and cultural rights. Economic and social rights such as the right to work and protection against unemployment, the right to fair wages, the right to a standard of living that is adequate for the health and well-being of self and family, and the right to education are rights which have been systematically violated for some members of visible minorities.

Cultural rights such as the right to express cultural distinctiveness through language, religion or customs etc., are also rights which have been jeopardized for certain members of visible minorities. The systematic violation of these rights has resulted in loss of opportunities and subsequent loss of rewards for a substantial number of visible minorities.

According to Agocs et al., (1992), these "historical dimensions of inequality are embedded in the social structures and cultural patterns of our society creating a cumulative cycle of disadvantage for...racial minorities" (p. 39). Social and cultural institutions such as the media and educational establishments

> transmit the values, ethics and mores of the society in which they function....[The key powerholders]...share a social structure with the larger white community - a community that derives and maintains its power through its institutions (churches, businesses, government and professional organizations.). (Endicott and Mukherjee, 1992, pp. 5-6)

Because visible minorities frequently do not share the same cultural background as the dominant group, they are often excluded from these institutions. The ramifications of having a different cultural background include being penalized in selection interviews because of accent, body language, dress or for simply not 'fitting in.'

Human Rights Education

The preamble to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights stresses the importance of human rights teaching and education. Eide (1989) elaborates on the importance of human rights education as follows:

> Human rights education is essential in order to obtain an environment in which the government can make its contribution to ensure human rights. The individuals must obtain the necessary knowledge of human rights in their national and international dimensions. Human rights education must foster tolerance, respect and solidarity among members of society. The individual must be aware not only of her or his rights, but also learn to respect the rights of others. (p. 13)

On October 17, 1974, at the General Conference of the United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), it was decided that education should be the subject of a recommendation to all member states. It was agreed that human rights education should

> develop a sense of social responsibility and of solidarity with less privileged groups and should lead to the observance of the principles of equality in everyday conduct....Member states should promote, at every stage of education, an active civic training which will enable every person to gain a knowledge of the method of operation and the work of public institutions....Education should emphasize the true interests of peoples and their incompatibility with the interests of monopolistic groups holding economic and political power which practice exploitation....(Tarrow, 1992, pp. 38-39)

Members of visible minorities and members of the mainstream public should be aware of their own human rights, the human rights of others and the negative consequences which result when human rights violations occur. A comprehensive effort to educate for human rights must take place. Unfortunately, human rights educational initiatives are often unpopular because they require in-depth self-reflection, examination of our own biases and prejudices, and questioning of taken-for-granted 'givens.' It is necessary to reevaluate the mechanisms and philosophies that currently undergird the distribution of power and wealth in our society. There is a need to reexamine the 'myth of meritocracy' which holds that our world is an essentially 'fair' and 'just' place and that the processes which 'sort' people into their 'place' in this world are also 'fair' and 'just.'

Although most people fear change, it is necessary if human rights are to be genuinely acknowledged. If the principles behind human rights education are to be successful in creating an equitable world where there is respect between all citizens, the implementation of this education will have to be widespread and continuous. The role of education for human rights in creating a world of justice and peace is indeed substantial. Bobbett (1991) appropriately defines peace not as "a state of non-war but a society based on the constant and active practice of human rights principles" (p. 226).

Human rights education motivates people to reevaluate the world with a critical perspective, to become active and refuse to be passive receptacles for taken-for-granted 'fact' or 'knowledge'. Human rights education seeks to empower people to take responsibility for their world, not by adopting a fatalistic guilt over the current state of affairs, but by developing hope and determination for a better future. Human rights education encourages the development of "trust and confidence in one's own capacity, and in the capacity of [others]...to make an impact on what happens" (Richardson, 1991, p. 6).

A critical human rights education paradigm encourages students to develop a knowledge base related to human rights as well as cultivate certain personal values and skills. In addition, human rights education seeks to alter the overall ethos of all institutions.

Human rights educators believe that individuals must acquire a general human rights knowledge base which includes a knowledge of major historical developments related to human rights, such as the major declarations, conventions and covenants. It also seeks to clarify the distinction between political/legal and social/economic/cultural rights and the relationship between individual, group, and national rights. (Shafer, 1992, p. 172). It is also necessary to be aware of the various human rights agencies and organizations such as the United Nations, the Canadian Human Rights Commission and the Alberta Human Rights and Citizenship Commission and their role with regard to human rights in their own jurisdictions. General political literacy is also essential because as Stimmann Branson (1982) affirms, informed world opinion is imperative for the protection and implementation of human rights.

In addition to a general knowledge base, there are many precise skills and values that human rights educators strive to develop in all individuals. Effective communication skills are seen as vitally important. Learning how to express oneself and listen in an effective fashion is important. These skills are critical to creating an open communication network which can promote understanding, respect, and cooperation.

Conflict resolution skills are also important. Because conflict is inevitable and even healthy, individuals need to learn how to express themselves assertively without lapsing into passivity or aggression. Human rights education requires that we look at conflict in a different way. Instead of avoiding conflict as something that makes us uncomfortable, human rights education teaches us that conflict "can, indeed, act as a catalyst for beneficial change. The desired result is to replace negative, violent and destructive patterns with constructive and positive ones..." (Bobbett, 1991, p. 226).

Developing skills related to critical thinking is also an indispensable component of human rights education. It is necessary to learn how to analyze and evaluate information from various sources, identify the different perspectives and detect prejudice and bias. Because of the tremendous impact that the media has on our perception of reality, there is a special focus on developing media literacy skills.

Developing critical thinking skills also involves learning to be self-critical. It is necessary to look closely at our own lives and examine our patterns of consumption and our relationships with others. We need to explore the ways in which our own lifestyles perpetuate an unjust and unpeaceful status quo. We also need to examine our tendencies to pursue our own self interest at the expense of others. In undertaking this 'self audit', it is important to challenge the myth that people get what they deserve in a truly fair and just world. Torney-Purta (1982) suggests that

> individuals have a stake in maintaining the belief that the world is just - that people get what they deserve. That 'myth' allows the individual to justify his [or her] own enjoyment of positive outcomes and his [or her] own pursuit of self-interest. When confronted with a victim of blatant injustice, the individual will often either distort the views of the victim to emphasize the ways in which he or she really deserves to suffer...or minimize the amount of suffering being experienced. Victims of human rights violations - hungry people in other nations, political prisoners, racial groups suffering discrimination - also are apt to be seen as somehow responsible for their fates....It allows [individuals] to believe that as long as they are 'good people' they will not suffer a similar fate.... (p. 42)

Human rights education challenges us to alter our 'blame the victim' mentality, accept our own complicity, and take positive action so that the human rights of all can be recognized.

Self-respect and self-esteem are two vital components for the full realization of human rights for all. Human rights are based on reciprocal respect between all human beings. Human rights educators emphasize that it is very difficult to respect others when you do not respect yourself. Fostering self-respect and self-esteem is thus one of the most integral characteristics which could fostered in individuals.

Action skills are also essential. After gaining an understanding of the issues and becoming aware of opportunities for action, individuals need to learn how to apply this knowledge in a concrete fashion. Such skills include participating in group discussions, understanding and using the mechanisms for the protection of human rights, petitioning, lobbying and organizing interest groups. Awareness without action is impotent. It is only through action that genuine change can take place. As Toh (1986) states "...awareness and choice will have to be translated into social and political action to replace intra-societal and inter-societal values and relationships with alternative PEACE principles" (p. 165).

In order for an ethos which genuinely respects the beliefs of human rights education to exist, human rights principles must permeate all aspects of an institution. In general, people are very sensitive to hypocrisy, therefore authoritarianism and empty rhetoric must be avoided. As part of an effort to alter the current ethos of organizations to make them consistent with the principles espoused by human rights education, many time-honored traditions may need to be critically reexamined. For example, most organizations are centered around the concept of competition. This type of institutional ethos can promote a lack of trust, lack of co-operation, and lack of compassion towards others. Human rights educators challenge us to imagine what would happen if we altered the structure of institutions to be cooperative rather than competitive.

Allowing everyone to play an active role in the decision-making process is also important when attempting to create an institutional ethos based on human rights principles. When people are included as part of a team rather than excluded, they will likely develop more favorable attitudes towards the institution and be more inclined to contribute in a positive fashion.

Human rights educators also ask us to reevaluate the kinds of societal values we reinforce when we reward only certain types of achievement. As Cunningham (1991) points out, many awards ceremonies in educational or other institutions honor individuals for academic achievement or financial success. By neglecting to honor individuals for such things as charity fund-raising or other forms of community service or for overcoming obstacles, we fail to positively reinforce these achievements.

A recommendation specific to educational institutions is the need to reexamine the curriculum - both official and hidden. Much of the traditional curriculum displays both subtle and blatant evidence of bias, prejudice, stereotyping, racism, and sexism. "A combination of bias, stereotype, and prejudice are found widely in schoolbooks, literature and the media...[and help] to perpetuate racism and sexism and the discrimination and inequality which result from these" (Starkey, 1991, p. 26). As far as other institutions are concerned, the policies, procedures manuals, mission statements, etc., of institutions need to examined for the above mentioned problems.

Although the above noted aspects of human rights education do not represent an exhaustive inventory of all facets of the field, they do provide a framework for linking the objectives of human rights education with those of employment equity. It is clear that human rights education can play an important role in promoting the goals of employment equity. Human rights education needs to be ingrained into educational and employment settings in a systematic and permanent manner. Meade (1990) insists that there is a need for all employees "to understand what systemic discrimination is and how to recognize it in their workplace" (p. 11). It is also vital for employees to have an understanding of employment equity related concepts. Encouraging human rights principles within the system, the habits or the status quo of institutions helps to ensure that they will become a permanent fixture within institutional settings. Thus, it is necessary "to make the transition from a diluted form of human rights education to a systematic application..." (Best, 1990, p. 7).

Employment Equity

As stated earlier, Canada is becoming an increasingly ethnoculturally diverse nation. In fact, Montgomery and McDonald (1991), have suggested that Canada's population will actually begin to decline by the year 2010 if immigration is not increased. It would seem, therefore, necessary for Canada to increase immigration in order to maintain its population and continue to support the social programs that we have come to expect. Meade (1990) states that "in order to maintain the present population...and for the economy to remain stable, it is predicted that Canada will need 175,000 newcomers each year. Third World countries are fast becoming the main source of immigrants..." (p. 5). In fact, Sharpe (1990) adds that in the 1990s, approximately 60 percent of entrants to the labor market are from designated groups of which a large part are visible minorities (p. 464).

It is therefore necessary for Canada and Canadian institutions to reevaluate the ways in which current attitudes and institutional practices have tended to undervalue the vast contributions made by members of visible minorities. Many studies have documented both the individual and systemic discrimination experienced by members of visible minorities such as, No *Discrimination Here? Toronto Employers and the Multi-Racial Work Force* (1985), and *Who Gets the Work: A Test of Racial Discrimination in Employment* (1985). Perhaps the most widely known study is *The Royal Commission on Equality in Employment* (1984) conducted by Judge Rosalie Abella. Judge Abella's report

> recommended mandatory employment equity legislation and regulations as a remedy for deeply entrenched patterns of disadvantage in the Canadian Workplace....[This report acknowledged that the] "patterns of disadvantage for the four groups designated in employment equity policy [women, Aboriginal peoples, visible minorities and people with disabilities] are particularly pronounced and persistent. (Agocs et al., 1992, p. 37)

Four factors were examined which are believed to be statistical indicators of possible systemic discrimination. These factors are "participation rates, unemployment rates, income levels, and occupational segregation" (Kallan, 1995, p. 247). Members of the designated groups were consulted and there was consensus that the following forms of categorical discrimination were frequently experienced:

> insufficient or inappropriate education and training facilities; inadequate information systems about training and employment opportunities; no voice in the decision-making process in programs affecting them; employers' restrictive recruitment, hiring and promotion practices; and discriminatory assumptions. (Kallan, 1995, p. 248)

Judge Abella's report was extremely significant as it resulted in the development of two federal employment equity programs in Canada. The first of these programs resulted from the federal Employment Equity Act which was passed in 1986. It applies to

> employers and crown corporations with 100 employees or more under federal jurisdiction. The legislation requires these employers to file an annual report...on the representations of all employees and members of designated groups by occupational group and salary range and on those hired, promoted, or terminated month by month for a full year....In addition to the report, the employers are also required to prepare an annual employment equity plan with goals and timetables....(Jain, 1988, p. 13)

Judge Abella's report also resulted in the creation of the Federal Contractors' Program (FCP) in 1986. The FCP applies to

> organizations with 100 or more employees which bid on federal government contracts for goods and services worth $200,000 or more. [The employers are]...required to sign a certificate of commitment to design and carry out an employment equity program. (Jain, 1988, p. 20)

Critics contend that the Employment Equity Act and the Federal Contractors Program need to be strengthened in order to be effective. They feel that both initiatives are lacking an effective enforcement component.

> There is no mechanism to guard against [employment equity] plans which may be poorly devised with no meaningful goals and timetables....What is more, there is no penalty for non-compliance with the action plan to prepare goals and timetables. (Jain, 1988, p. 28)

It is also suggested that the program should be more widely applicable i.e., to employers with 50 employees or more with contracts of $50,000 or more. These critics believe the need to proceed from rhetoric to reality is pressing. "In a number of cases there is still a wide disparity between proclaimed ideals, declared intentions and the actual situation" (Tarrow, 1992, p. 36).

October of 1996 marked a victory for those who wanted to see the Employment Equity Act strengthened. According to the Canadian Human Rights Commission's 1996 Annual Report, "almost exactly ten years after the original Employment Equity Act came into force, a new more vigorous statute became law" (p. 62). Not only was the scope of the act expanded to include employees of the Federal Public Service but it provided the Canadian Human Rights Commission with "an explicit responsibility for ensuring compliance" (p. 63). The annual report elaborates on the changes as follows:

> Under the new law, federal employers will continue to submit annual reports on the representation in their ranks of people from the four designated groups. They also retain the obligation to conduct analyses of their workforce and employment systems in order to develop appropriate action plans. What is most significantly new is the authority given to the Commission to *audit* both public and private sector employers. Whereas the original statute depended to a considerable extent on complaints of discrimination brought under the Human Rights Act, the revised Employment Equity Act placed the emphasis on having employers systematically achieve the sort of diversity that exists in Canadian society and in the labour force at large. (p. 63)

Although the amended Employment Equity Act represents a step in the right direction in the minds of certain critics it still requires improvement. One such improvement would entail bringing the Canadian Armed Forces and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police under the authority of the Act.

There have recently been several important findings or studies which highlight the need to further strengthen employment equity legislation and regulations. An article in the *Edmonton Journal* (March 20, 1997), told of how a human rights tribunal recently found that the entire federal department of Health Canada systematically discriminated against visible minorities. Not only was the department criticized for its "poor record of hiring and promoting minorities," but they were ordered to pay over $100,000.00 in damages to two scientists who were discriminated against. In addition to being criticized for systemic discriminatory practices, examples of interpersonal racism within the department were also brought to the public's attention. Examples included a Trinidadian employee being addressed with the greeting "Hello darkness, my old friend" and "Blackie."

There was also the report submitted to the Canadian Human Rights Commission in 1997 entitled *Visible Minorities and the Public Service of Canada*. The report noted that despite the fact that visible minorities represent 12% of the Canadian labour force, they represent only 4.1% of the employees in the Canadian Public Service. The study is instructive in that it provides "constructive input by identifying elements in hiring practices and in the workplace environment that may help to explain the statistical patterns observed above" (Canadian Human Rights Commission, 1997a, p. 3).

Meade (1990) completed another important report entitled *Employment Equity for Visible Minority Women*. The report noted that the effects of systemic discrimination can be even more pronounced for female members of visible minorities who experience the double jeopardy of discrimination related to ethnicity *and* gender.

It would be useful at this point to discuss some of the specific issues and concepts related to employment equity. As discussed earlier in the section regarding critical multiculturalism, power is one of the key factors which needs to be examined when discussing employment equity.

> Discrimination may occur when power is used by dominant groups, or by individual members of such groups, in ways that support their positions of advantage, and at the same time deprive members of other groups of access to those same privileges.... (Agocs et al., 1992, p. 54)

Visible minorities are often expected to "conform to expectations rooted in the cultural norms and values of the majority, and of traditionally powerful groups in the organization" (Agocs et al., 1992, p. 64). It is important to understand how the subtle and not so subtle uses of power can create what has been referred to as 'common sense' or taken-for-granted 'realities' that appear to be accepted by all of society's members. It is necessary to question how power and 'common-sense realities' are used to create the impression that we live in an egalitarian society where there is equal opportunity for all.

> Occupational choices may appear to be free choices, but often, they are based upon learned perceptions of which occupations are realistic and appropriate for one's own ethnic group. Furthermore, institutional racism impacts on people's opportunity in a way that makes them appear to deserve their lack of mobility, but this is instead a function of limited situations. (Agocs et al., 1992, p. 65)

It is necessary to understand that ideas which are seen as 'normal', 'neutral' and 'objective' are frequently the ideas which the socially, politically, and economically powerful segment of society deem as important. Thus, it is easy for such policies to disadvantage those who do not belong to that socially, politically and economically powerful group. "Canada and many other countries have deep links with 19th century Europe and, consequently, reflect the world-view of that time and place in our social, cultural and political structures" (Endicott and Mukherjee, 1992, p. 11). It is thus necessary to acknowledge the origins of our assumptions and to begin to challenge them.

In addition to the economic, political and social disenfranchisement of visible minorities, these apparently 'neutral' and 'objective' ideas which result in discrimination can frequently have a strong psychological impact on members of visible minorities.

> The impact of discrimination on members of the designated groups can create a crisis of confidence, a lack of self-esteem, lowered expectations, and the perception that one has to be twice as good as a member of the dominant group to succeed....Like poverty, the cycle of disadvantage and discrimination is hard to break. There is a cumulative effect that limits individuals' expectations, education, training and level of employment. (Agocs et al., 1992, p. 57)

Although this study concerns the employment environment at the University of Alberta, it is important to situate it within the larger community. It is necessary to consider the political, economic and social structures of the larger of community in order to understand the extent to which these over-arching structures of power impact upon the employment environment at the University of Alberta. Brown (1990) states

> while we can't work on the broad questions of social and institutional racism without acknowledging the difficulties of the workplace, neither can we effectively look at racism in the workplace without looking at the broader questions of social and institutional racism. (p. 459)

Hence, the need for employment equity is clear. But what is 'equality' or 'equity' and how is it defined? As Endicott and Mukherjee state: "equality does not mean treating everyone equally" (p. 4). Tellier (1990) stresses "treating people fairly involves understanding that they are not all the same....Taking account of differences and accommodating them where possible requires a level of effort that goes beyond the strict sense of equality" (p. 270).

Although some have claimed that employment equity involves 'reverse discrimination,' this is not at all the intent.

> Employment equity is not designed to give privileges to certain groups. It is designed to end discrimination against them. It ensures that qualified workers who were previously denied access to jobs will have the opportunity to fill these jobs....Employment equity does not discriminate against any group for the benefit of another. What it does, is ensure equitable representation of all groups in the workforce in proportion to their numbers in the larger population. (Allan, 1988, pp. 15-16)

Employment equity programs typically focus on two major areas: employment systems and employment culture. Employment systems can include any policies, practices or procedures, whether they be formal or informal, that govern employment decision-making. Examples include: recruitment, selection and hiring, training and development, transfer and promotion, conditions of employment, pay and benefits, leaves, disciplinary action, dismissals, lay-offs and the process of recall. Employment culture involves

> the basic assumptions and beliefs understood or articulated by the organization. Employment culture determines the atmosphere and workplace environment and whether or not it is supportive and welcoming of designated group members....[Employment equity acknowledges that] disadvantage...manifests itself when the environment of the workplace is not as supportive or welcoming for members of the designated groups as it is for white, able-bodied males. (Agocs et al., 1992, p. 45)

After having provided a brief definition of equity and the primary goals of employment equity, it is useful to engage more critically in a discussion regarding certain employment equity issues. Many theorists assert that in order for employment equity strategies to be effective, they need to avoid essentialist notions of identity. Hence, a comprehensive employment equity plan needs to avoid dangerous simplifications which view certain groups as homogeneous entities. As Fay (1996) points out

> not all members of a group are alike in all respects. I may be a member of the middle class, but I may differ in significant ways from the other members of this class (they may be female, black, non-religious, rural, unschooled, and so on.) Indeed, depending on how one looks at the members of any group, the differences within the group can often be as great as the differences between its members and other members of this group....All groups necessarily include distinctions (for example, between those with and those without authority) that introduce and reinforce difference between them. Thus, it is simplistic to think that groups are comprised of homogeneous units which are all alike in ways that radically distinguish them from members of all other groups. (p. 53-54)

Fay (1996) also stresses the divergent and often antagonistic interests of members of a cultural group and the interplay and exchange between different cultural groups. Therefore, within any given cultural group, members undeniably have differences in gender, class, sexual orientation, religious and political beliefs levels of education and so forth. Thus, employment equity plans need to ensure that they take into consideration the multiple levels of oppression that exist in society. To understand racial inequality, there is a need to look beyond 'race' as the sole determinant of this inequality. If only 'race' or culture is considered then the focus of employment equity initiatives will mainly be on greater representation of 'visible minorities.' However, a lack of consideration of class, gender, sexual orientation may result in greater employment equity for middle class, heterosexual visible minority males only. As Kivel (1996) indicates, creating a 'multicultural ruling class' does not address the oppression and inequity faced by poor visible minority women for example.

Though it is important to acknowledge entrenched patterns of disadvantage, it is also important to clarify that every member of the four designated groups does not necessarily feel that they are disadvantaged. Although it is true that the level of ability, education, skills and other factors vary from individual to individual, and the experiences of each individual vary, there *is*, however, evidence of inequality at the group level.

Some critics of employment equity contend that it involves arbitrarily imposing inflexible quotas with no consideration for education, skill or experience. This is not the case, it involves setting realistic and flexible goals and timetables in order to correct the effects of group disadvantage. Other critics contend that employment equity allows 'unqualified' people to obtain jobs by 'lowering standards'. Employment equity, as is it currently envisaged, ensures that 'qualified' individuals who have previously been denied access to employment will have an opportunity to work in their desired occupation. The 'merit' of the worker is always considered. However, the meaning of the word 'merit' is questioned by some. When talking about 'lowering standards' or 'maintaining standards' the meaning of the word 'standards' is problematic for those who support a more critical approach to employment equity. Whose standards are being referred to? Which group has set the 'standards' and according to whose value system? Postmodern theory as discussed earlier in this chapter greatly informs this discussion. Those who have power in society are able to control discourse and define 'reality,' 'truth' and in this case 'excellence', 'merit,' and what constitutes being 'qualified.' It is not surprising that members of the majority groups are more advantaged in the labour force because they have the power to 'set the rules' within the parameters of their own specific value system.

If employment equity is to be based on the 'merit' principle, it is necessary to consider why all individuals don't have the same degree of 'excellence?' This would entail examining the various levels of oppression such as those related to gender, race, class, and sexual orientation as well and the historical and relational character of these forms of oppression.

Conclusion

It is hoped that this research project will emphasize the long-term benefits of having an effective employment equity program. After all,

> "we know only too well that when our workforce reflects the multicultural reality of this country, we will simply get more varied input, more ideas

> from which to choose, a more vibrant chemistry among the participants, and certainly a 'painting' more reflective of our country" (McEwen, 1990, p. 173).

The following quote reflects upon how the world would be a more inclusive and just place if the rights and voices of all individuals and groups were respected and no one group had more power than another. This is, after all, the primary message which critical multicultural education, human rights education and employment equity seek to convey.

> People of the circle, who speak in turn and listen to all with respect and dignity, who include the ideas of others as worthwhile and useful...and who know that one single voice is no more important than the collective voice, will provide the model for a global village and a true new world order (Ritchie, 1995, p. 316).

Chapter III

Research Methodology

This chapter outlines the methodology utilized in completing the research project. The introduction includes a discussion of the qualitative/narrative and critical research paradigms that guided the study. Next, the funding source and those who collaborated in the project are acknowledged. A detailed description of the research sample and data collection instruments is then presented, followed by a description of the steps taken to ensure that ethical research procedures were followed. Lastly, measures implemented to ensure reliability and validity are discussed.

Orientation

The research was conducted using qualitative research methodology. Interviews, questionnaires and document analysis were the three primary qualitative research methods utilized. Both the interview process and the questionnaire sought to elicit open-ended responses from the participants. Qualitative research methodology was preferential because of its focus on understanding the personal perspectives of the research participants rather than viewing them simply as numerical statistics. As Lindlof (1995) states, qualitative research is "especially well suited to helping the researcher understand a social actor's own perspective" (p. 167). Denzin and Lincoln (1994) emphasize that researchers need to demonstrate a "commitment to the study of the world from the point of view of the interacting individual" (p. 100). When the perspectives of participants are solicited, the researcher is able to become more empathic and see other standpoints. Seidman (1991) indicates that qualitative research involves "an interest in understanding the experience of other people and the meaning they make of that experience....[while still] recognizing the limits of our understanding of others, [i.e., we can never *fully* understand others] we can still strive to comprehend them..." (p. 3).

As mentioned in Chapter II, one aspect of postmodern theory has been concerned with allowing the voices of those who have been previously silenced to speak. The intent of soliciting narrative responses from participants and representing the data using the participants' own words is to allow for the participants' voices to be acknowledged without being interpreted by the researcher. Fontana and Frey (1994) stress that qualitative research is concerned with "preserving the viewpoint of the subjects as expressed in their everyday language" (p. 370). Lindlof (1995) also emphasizes the "expressive richness of the respondents' own language" (p. 165).

Another benefit of qualitative research is that individual experiences and personal narratives of research participants are included. Hence, the participants are not reduced to objects or to cold numerical abstractions. Denzin and Lincoln (1994) question "standard...social scientific methodologies [because they believe that these methodologies] produce people as objects" (p. 101). Fontana and Frey (1994) stress that qualitative research seeks rather to create a situation whereby "the other is no longer a distant, aseptic, quantified, sterilized, measured, categorized, and catalogued, faceless respondent, but has become a living human being..." (p. 373).

This study has also been informed by critical research assumptions and principles. Kincheloe and McLaren (1994) explain that the critical research model emerged from the reaction of researchers who were troubled by "the contradiction between progressive...rhetoric of egalitarianism and the reality of racial and class discrimination" (p. 139). According to Fay (1987) critical research "wishes its audience to reflect on the nature of its life, and to change those practices and policies which cannot be justified on the basis of this reflection" (p. 66).

Kinchloe and McLaren (1994) define the critical researcher is an individual who

> attempts to use his or her work as a form of social or cultural criticism and who accepts certain basic assumptions: that all thought is fundamentally mediated by power relations that are socially and historically constituted; that facts can never be isolated from the domain of values or removed from some form of ideological inscription;...that certain groups in any society are privileged over others and, although the reasons for this privileging may vary widely, the oppression that characterizes contemporary societies is most forcefully reproduced when subordinates accept their social status as natural, necessary or inevitable;...that mainstream research practices are generally, although most often unwittingly, implicated in the reproduction of systems of class, race and gender oppression (pp. 139-140).

One of the main components of the critical research paradigm is transformation and emancipation through empowerment. Empowerment can be explained as the process through which people come to see themselves as active agents who can bring about change in their own lives. Paraphrasing Friere (1972), Fay (1996) notes that even the oppressed are agents who need to recognize their powers of agency in order to enact these powers in effective ways. Kincheloe and McLaren (1994) elaborate on the concept of empowerment below.

> Critical research can best be understood in the context of empowerment of individuals. Inquiry that aspires to the name critical must be connected to an attempt to confront the injustice of a particular society or sphere

> within society. Research thus becomes a transformative endeavor....The source of this emancipatory action involves the researcher's ability to expose the contradictions of world appearances accepted by the dominant culture as natural and inviolable. (p. 140)

Fay (1987) notes that empowerment encourages people to "cease being mere objects in the world....[and provides the means] whereby these people can be subjects, active beings who author the direction of their lives" (p. 75).

He also outlines some of the key theses which need to be considered when attempting to adopt critical research assumptions and principles (Fay, 1996). The theses which are particularly suitable to this study as they have been formulated with multicultural research in mind include:

- think dialectically and avoid dualisms which lead to an either/or mentality.
- don't think of the 'other' as the other. We are the persons we are because of our relationship with others.
- think in terms of processes not objects. Society and culture are wrongly treated as objects. Think of them instead as ongoing processes.
- insist on the agency of those being studied i.e., their power to act on their own behalf.
- do not think of societies as being completely different and isolated from one another. Even the most homogeneous societies have significant internal differences (i.e., religion, gender, class, caste, ethnicity).
- acknowledge the historical nature of knowledge, identity etc. "The past is not the past: it lives in the present....in the effects which continue to ripple through time long after an event has occurred..." (p. 243).
- don't try to convince yourself that you are capable of neutrality or complete objectivity in your research. It is not possible to separate yourself from the research emotionally and intellectually. Your preconceptions definitely play a role. "Objectivity requires fairness and accountability, not neutrality; it is a way of conducting research, not a mirroring of Reality As It Is" (p. 244).

I feel that the incorporation of these theses into my research has greatly assisted me in engaging with critical research assumptions and principles.

Research Funding and Assistance

This research has been funded through a research grant from the Employment Equity Discretionary Fund which is administered by a sub-committee of the University of Alberta's Employment Equity Committee.

The research was conducted in collaboration with the Office of Human Rights at the University of Alberta. I worked closely with the Employment Equity Advisor in conceptualizing the overall scope of the research project and in designing the actual questionnaire. The Harassment Advisor at the Office of Human Rights also contributed greatly to the study. The Office of Human Rights facilitated utilization of the University of Alberta's Employment Equity Census data while strictly maintaining the confidentiality and anonymity of the census respondents. The Population Research Lab at the University of Alberta provided feedback with regard to the questionnaire and assisted with the SPSS data analysis.

Sample Selection

On October 7, 1991, the Office of Human Rights distributed an initial Employment Equity Census to all full and part-time members of the University's continuing staff. Following this mass distribution in 1991, the Office of Human Rights has continued to send out employment equity census forms to all new continuing academic and non-academic staff. Completion of the census is not mandatory and only those who so desire, complete and return the census to the Office of Human Rights. This census facilitates the collection of information on the employment status of designated group employees. The census requests that respondents indicate whether they are male or female. It also asks respondents whether they consider themselves to be an aboriginal person, a person with a disability that may disadvantage them in employment, a member of a visible minority group or a specific combination of the above.

In order to assist employees in completing the census, a definition of Aboriginal Peoples, Persons with Disabilities and Persons from Visible Minority Groups is provided. The census defines Persons from Visible Minority Groups as follows:

> Members of visible minorities are persons who are non-Caucasian in race, or non-white in color. Examples of visible minority groups are: Black, Asian, Middle Eastern, etc. (Aboriginal persons are not included as members of visible minorities.)

Using a database, the Office of Human Rights has established and maintained statistics regarding employees from all designated groups. For purposes of this study, it is useful to be aware of the 10 major occupational categories in which support staff can be employed. These include:

03-Professionals
05-Supervisors
07-Clerical Workers
09-Service-Workers
11-Semi-Skilled Manual Workers
04-Semi-professionals and Technicians
06-Foremen/women
08-Sales Workers
10-Skilled Crafts and Trades
12-Other Manual Workers

Academic staff are employed in categories 01 - Upper Managers, 02 - Middle and Other Managers, and 03 - University Teachers and Other Professionals. Although it was not the object of this project to focus on academic staff, it is beneficial to be aware of certain details regarding this group of employees.

It is also important to note that there are certain occupations which are categorized as 03 - Professionals despite the fact that they are non-academic positions. An example of an occupation which falls in this 'grey area' is computer analyst. Thus, there was the possibility of including employees whose positions are classified as 03 - 'other professionals' because some are considered as non-academic/support staff.

As of December 31, 1995, there were 2,219 full-time and part-time continuing support staff employed at the University of Alberta. Of this group, 253 designated themselves as members of a visible minority group. Thus, visible minorities made up at least 11% of the support staff. As of December 31, 1995, there were 1904 full-time and part-time continuing academic staff. Of this group, 156 designated themselves as members of visible minority groups. Hence, at least 8% of academic staff were visible minorities. The total number of part-time and full-time continuing academic and support staff combined was 4123 of which 409 identified themselves as visible minorities. Thus, visible minorities accounted for at least 9% of the part-time and full-time continuing employees overall. It is important to note that the statistics utilized for this study were based on those who responded to the Employment Equity Census for which the overall response rate was 86.8%. Thus, when I refer to the 'number' of visible minority employees, I am referring to the number of visible minorities who designated themselves as such in the Employment Equity Census.

Besides the total number of visible minorities in a workforce, it is also useful to identify the type of positions in which visible minorities are employed. The following table provides a breakdown of the number of self-identified visible minorities employed in each of the above-noted occupational categories as of December 31, 1995.

Table 3-1 **Number of Self-Identified Visible Minority Employees by Occupational Code as of December 31, 1995**

Type of Appointment	Occupational Code	Corresponding Occupational Category[1]	Number of Visible Minority Employees
Academic	0C-1	Upper Level Managers	0
Academic	0C-2	Middle & Other Managers	21
Academic	0C-3	Professionals-University Teachers Professionals-Other Professionals	129 6
Support	0C-3	Professionals - Other Professionals	28
Support	0C-4	Semi-Professionals & Technicians	37
Support	0C-5	Supervisors	15
Support	0C-6	Foremen/women	6
Support	0C-7	Clerical Workers	94
Support	0C-8	Sales Workers	0*
Support	0C-9	Service Workers	18
Support	0C-10	Skilled Crafts and Trades	4
Support	0C-11	Semi-Skilled Manual Workers	2
Support	0C-12	Other Manual Workers	49

* According to *Opening Doors: A Plan for Employment Equity at the University of Alberta* "no employees at the University of Alberta have been classified in this [08-Sales Workers] occupational group" (p. 19). This reduced to nine the number of occupational categories in which visible minority support staff could be employed.

At the time of the questionnaire mailout for this study, there were 234 self-designated visible minority employees working in support positions at the University of Alberta. This number is slightly lower than the numbers provided as of December 31, 1995 due to retirements, lay-offs and so forth. Thus, the sample was derived from those employees who voluntarily chose to respond to the census, identified themselves as visible minorities and were working in non-academic (support) positions at the time of the mailout.

As noted above, the sample includes all full- and part-time continuing employees. Due to the fact that recurring term employees only work from September to April, and the initial mail out was scheduled for August 19th, the decision was made not to include recurring term employees in this study. Based on data from the Office of Human Rights, there were only five (5) visible minority employees in support positions classified as recurring term.

It was deemed important to include any employees who were 'on leave' in the sample. As sick leave or stress leave might be related to the issues being explored in the questionnaire, the information received could potentially be relevant. Therefore, questionnaires were mailed to the home addresses of any employees who were on a leave of any sort.

Consequently, the study involved sending a questionnaire to all 234 part- and full-time self-designated visible minority employees in support positions. Because completion of the questionnaire was completely voluntary, the actual sample used for analysis included only those individuals who elected to respond.

Research Instruments and Data Collection

The primary qualitative research methods employed in this study include a questionnaire, interviews and document analysis. A more detailed description of each of these three data collection methods follows.

Questionnaire

Questionnaires are useful research instruments for many reasons. Lindlof (1995) elaborates on several benefits of using a questionnaire. In the quote below Lindlof refers to a 'questionnaire' as a 'survey.'

> Surveys rely on standardized sequences and forms of questions and, usually, sets of closed-ended responses. Strengths of surveys include their usefulness in systematic coding and analyzing of responses among the members of a sample and in the inference of population values. Survey methodology also aspires to high levels of validity and reliability through the minimization of the impact of the research experience itself on the individual responses. (p. 164)

There are several other benefits of utilizing a questionnaire. Many people prefer to complete a questionnaire rather than be interviewed. Unlike interviews, most questionnaires allow individuals to remain anonymous from the researcher while still being able to participate. Furthermore, completing a questionnaire usually involves far less of a time commitment from the participant than an interview would.

Because topics addressed using a questionnaire are asked of all participants without variance, questionnaires can be perceived to have more content comparability. When the topics addressed are the same for each participant, this facilitates analysis of the data. In addition, questionnaires allow the researcher to obtain feedback from a large number of participants without having to spend the copious amounts of time and money often required for interviewing and the processing of interview data.

For the above stated reasons, it was decided that a questionnaire would be utilized to explore the personal experiences of visible minority employees in support positions at the University of Alberta. The first section of the questionnaire asked respondents for background information such as their gender and ethnic or cultural background. The second section contained questions about the respondents' employment experiences at the University of Alberta in general. The third section explored the respondents' experiences with employment systems/procedures such as recruitment and selection, training and career development, and promotion and advancement. The fourth section inquired about aspects of the employee's current position. The data from the fourth section allowed for a comparison of opinions about specific units or departments and the employee's overall impression of the work climate at the University of Alberta. Most questions requested that respondents circle a number which most accurately reflected their opinion or circumstance. It is, however, important to note that the majority of the questions also provided space for respondents to answer the questions with narrative comments in their own words. The fifth section asked respondents to indicate any steps that they felt the University could take to create a more equitable (fair) employment environment for visible minority employees. There was also a section at the end of the questionnaire which allowed for additional comments of any nature. The questionnaire was distributed to all employees who self-identified as a *visible minority* in the Employment Equity Census, which is elaborated upon in the section regarding sample selection.

Preparation of the Questionnaire

In order to ascertain which questions, concepts and problems should be addressed in the questionnaire, several individuals who work closely with members of visible minorities were consulted. John Anchan, Executive Director, Edmonton Immigrant Services Association, provided examples of questions that he felt would be important to address. Allys Wamburu, Employment Counsellor, Mennonite Centre for Newcomers, also shared ideas regarding the challenges experienced by the visible minorities she counsels. Janet Smith, Harassment Advisor, Office of Human Rights, University of Alberta provided insight and knowledge recently gained after completing a series of seminars on workplace harassment for University of Alberta employees (including members of visible minorities).

A letter was sent to members of the Canadian Universities Employment Equity Network (CUEEN) in order to ascertain whether similar or related studies had taken place at other educational institutions in Canada (Appendix A). The CUEEN mailing list was provided by the Office of Human Rights at the University of Alberta. There were 55 members at the time of the mailout. The members of CUEEN were asked if any similar studies (formal and/or informal) had been undertaken at their institution. If so, they were asked if they could share any written reports or documentation about their findings. If not, they were asked if they had any intention of completing such a study. Information was also requested concerning any initiatives, services, and policies that are in place or soon to be implemented with regard to visible minorities in support positions.

Many of the responses were of interest in that they provided ideas about how to improve the current services and policies available to visible minority employees at the University of Alberta. In addition, ideas were gained about specific initiatives that could be implemented such as appointing a race relations officer or formulating an official policy on accommodation of religious or cultural traditions or practices. Of special interest was the information provided by York University and McMaster University. They provided copies of questionnaires that they had utilized for related endeavors at their Universities. The *Workplace Climate Survey For Non-Academic Employees* which was conducted at McMaster University and *The Survey About Non-Academic Employment at York University* both provided valuable ideas which assisted in the development of the questionnaire regarding visible minority support staff at the University of Alberta.

In addition to consulting with the members of CUEEN, other individuals at the University of Alberta were also asked for their advice and input. When developing certain questions, a knowledge of specific University regulations such as those related to training and career development opportunities was required. In order to ensure the accuracy of the information being included in the questionnaire, Cynthia Caskey of the University of Alberta's Human Resource Group was consulted. As a result of this consultation, certain questions were revised. For example, the wording of the questions regarding orientation procedures was amended following notification by Ms. Caskey that the University does "not have a university orientation program for new staff. It [the orientation] is the responsibility of individual departments."

Piloting of the Questionnaire

Dean MacKay, Senior Instructor, English as a Second Language Program, Alberta Vocational College (AVC), graciously agreed to allow for the piloting of the questionnaire to take place at AVC's Winnifred Stewart Campus. The main concern prior to the pilot study was that the questionnaire should not be beyond the English comprehension level of the respondents. The respondents could range from recent immigrants with limited English language skills to third or fourth generation Canadians who are completely fluent in English. It was thus necessary to write the questionnaire with these parameters in mind. It was important to avoid sounding condescending to those whose first language is English while at the same time designing the questionnaire for someone who has limited English language ability. At the suggestion of Janet Smith, Office of Human Rights, plain language writing was adopted.

For the pilot study, Mr. MacKay arranged for a meeting with three intermediate to advanced English as a Second Language (ESL) students who were attending ESL classes at AVC. The meeting was approximately one hour in length. The three students provided feedback regarding the questionnaire and the accompanying cover letters. The wording of the questionnaire and cover letters was modified in several instances as a consequence of the pilot study.

Distribution of Questionnaires

On August 6th, two weeks prior to the questionnaire distribution, Cathy Anne Pachnowski, Employment Equity Advisor, Office of Human Rights, sent a memo (Appendix B) to all personnel contacts, Deans, Directors, Chairs and senior members of the Non-Academic Staff Association. The memo informed all of the above listed individuals of the upcoming employment equity study and requested their cooperation in encouraging employees to complete the questionnaire.

The package which was mailed to 234 visible minority support staff included the questionnaire (Appendix C), and a cover letter from myself which explained the purpose and nature of the research (Appendix D). In addition to my introductory letter, Ms. Pachnowski also included a cover letter (Appendix E). This letter assured the employees that, in keeping with the Office of Human Rights' Code of Confidentiality, identities had not been revealed to me in any way. This letter also indicated that the Office of Human Rights fully supports the research endeavor.

The initial questionnaire package was mailed on August 19th and the follow-up questionnaire package was mailed on September 9, 1996. The documents discussed above were included in the initial package. The follow-up package also included a reminder card (Appendix F) which informed participants that in order to use their information, questionnaires would have to be returned by September 30, 1996.

Analysis of Questionnaire Data

89 of 234 total possible respondents returned the questionnaire. Thus, the response rate was 38%. After I edited and coded all responses, the Population Research Lab at the University of Alberta conducted SPSS data analysis and produced a brief report outlining frequency distributions and any cross-tabulations which I had requested.

Interviews

According to Lindlof (1995), interviews are beneficial because they allow responses to be furnished using "the expressive richness of the respondents' own language" (p. 165). In light of much of postmodern theory which stresses the importance of previously-silenced voices being given the opportunity for expression, this is a significant advantage of interviewing.

Interviewing is also beneficial because it provides the researcher with the opportunity to seek more information or clarify statements which are unclear. This is an advantage that usage of a questionnaire does not permit. As Lindlof (1995) states, interviewing "allows the interviewer and respondent to explore and negotiate mutually the meaning of the objects of inquiry" (p. 165).

Interviewing also allows for relevant avenues of inquiry that the researcher had not anticipated to be discovered. Again, this is an advantage not afforded by questionnaire usage unless open-ended questions are asked. An interview schedule or guide can be used to ensure comparability of responses, however, as Lindlof (1995) indicates

> ...an interview guide simply organizes a menu of topics to be covered and leaves the task of determining their exact order and articulation to the interviewer....Freedom exists for the interviewer to employ optional questions, pass on others, and depart briefly to go down an unexpected conversational path. (p. 185)

In order to obtain in-depth narrative data regarding visible minority employees' perceptions of their employment environment, interviews were requested via my cover letter which was included in the questionnaire package. Interviews were conducted with nine visible minority support staff members.

When a potential participant made contact and expressed a desire to participate in the interview process, I completed an *Interview Participant Tracking Sheet* (Appendix G). The tracking sheet noted such important details as the individual's name, phone number, position, standard occupational code, whether they worked full-time or part-time, total years employed at the University of Alberta, gender, and information regarding most convenient interview times and locations. Gender, full-time or part-time status, total years employed at the University of Alberta and standard occupational codes were included in the Interview Participant Tracking Sheet as a way of limiting the sample, should the number of people who volunteered to be interviewed exceed 10. As 9 individuals volunteered, there was no necessity to limit the sample.

I then gave the Office of Human Rights the name of each potential participant so that the participant's standard occupational code could be confirmed in order to avoid the possibility of all interviews being conducted with individuals from the same occupational code.

The initial plan was to wait for 10 individuals to come forward to ensure that a wide range of occupational codes was represented before beginning interviews. However, this was not possible. Due to the sensitive nature of the topics being discussed, several potential interviewees were hesitant and required a great deal of reassurance regarding confidentiality and anonymity. After establishing a certain level of trust, it did not seem appropriate to ask the potential interviewee to wait until the entire sample had been selected. As potential interviewees contacted me, interviews were scheduled. The range of interviewees turned out to be well-balanced. If additional interviewees had come forward from the occupational codes which were not yet represented, they would have been interviewed. It was decided that the number of interviews could be increased to 15 if necessary.

Interview Participants

In total, nine employees volunteered to be interviewed of which five were female and four male. Their occupational categories are as follows: two are employed as Semi-Professionals and Technicians (Occupational Code 04), one is employed as a Supervisor (Occupational Code 05), three are employed as Foremen/Women (Occupational Code 06) and three are employed as Clerical Workers (Occupational Code 07). Although it would have been ideal if one individual from each of the 9 support staff occupational codes had been interviewed, of the available categories, a broad range of occupational codes were represented. More detailed demographic characteristics of the interviewees have been deliberately excluded from this report in order to maintain their confidentiality and anonymity.

Eight interviews were conducted at the University of Alberta at mutually agreed upon venues. One interview was conducted off-campus at the request of the interviewee. The interviews were approximately one hour in length and took place on the dates indicated below:

August 26, 1996
September 4, 1996
September 5, 1996
September 16, 1996
September 17, 1996
September 19, 1996
September 27,1996
October 3, 1996
October 7, 1996

Interview Format

The interviews were semi-structured in format. For the most part, the questionnaire was utilized as a guide for discussion regarding the various topics. However, if an interviewee wished to discuss a topic which was not included in the questionnaire, such discussion was encouraged. Effort was made not to overly control the interview process, however, an attempt was made to ask the same questions of each participant to ensure comparability of responses.

Analysis of Interview Data

All interviews were transcribed and transcripts were provided to the interviewees for review. If the interviewee felt apprehensive about an incident or experience described, they struck it from the record. All nine interviewees edited their interview transcripts.

Each of the nine interviews were assigned numbers for citation purposes. The interview comments were then coded thematically and those that were clear and could be easily understood out of context were selected and transferred to another document the outline of which resembled the questionnaire.

Document Analysis

A detailed analysis of documentation related to employment equity at the University of Alberta was conducted. In addition to reviewing all of the documentation received from the members of CUEEN, the following documentation was analyzed.

- *Report of the President's Commission for Equality and Respect on Campus* (1990)
- *A Follow-Up Report One Year After the Report of the President's Commission on Equality and Respect* (1991)
- *Agreement between the Board of Governors of the University of Alberta and the Non-Academic Staff Association* (April 1, 1991 to March 31, 1993)
- *Guide to Training and Development Services and Policies* (1992)
- *Bridging the Gap: A Report of the Task Force on the Recognition of Foreign Qualifications* - Government of Alberta (May, 1992)
- *Opening Doors: A Plan for Employment Equity at the University of Alberta* (1994)
- Funding Proposal in Support of Equi-Link Hiring Line - Presented to Human Resources Development Canada by EmployAbilities (1994)
- Folio Article - *Update: Employment Equity Census* (December 9, 1994)
- Folio Article - *Employment Equity Census Scheduled: Temporary Employees, Including Sessionals, Targeted* (October 21, 1994)

- *Opening Doors: An Update* (1994)
- *Services of Interest to Women Employees at the University of Alberta* (November, 1994)
- *Services of Interest to Employees with Disabilities at the University of Alberta* (November, 1994)
- *Opening Doors: A Plan for Employment Equity at the University of Alberta 1994/95 Annual Report to General Faculties Council*
- Folio Article - *Results of Employment Equity Census - Term and Temporary Staff* (April 7, 1995)
- *Enhancing Equity for Visible Minority Students* - Project Report by. S.H. Toh and V. F. Cawagas, University of Alberta (September, 1996)
- Folio Article - *Tough Sledding for Opening Doors* (November 24, 1995)
- *Opening Doors: A Plan for Employment Equity at the University of Alberta 1995/96 Annual Report to General Faculties Council*
- *Employment Equity Applicant Survey*
- *Employment Equity Census Questionnaire*
- *Listing of Human Rights/Equity Groups on Campus*
- *Office of Human Rights Annual Report* (1995)
- Association of Academic Staff (AAS:UA) Newsletters *Racial Discrimination* (June, 1996) and *Racial Discrimination Revisited* (August, 1996)
- *Opening Doors: The University of Alberta's Employment Equity Plan in Action - Federal Contractors Program Second Compliance Review* (June, 1996)
- *Bylaws for the Employment Placement Interagency Council* (EPIC) (1996)
- *General Faculties Council Policy Manual* (September, 1996)
- *International Qualifications Assessment Service - Information Package* (May, 1997)

Research Ethics

Confidentiality

A detailed *Research Ethics Review Application* was submitted to and approved by the Ethics Review Committee of the Department of Educational Policy Studies.

Anonymity and confidentiality was guaranteed to all participants involved in the study. The identity of questionnaire respondents has not been divulged in any way. In fact, even I have not been informed of the identity of the questionnaire respondents. The identity of all interview participants has also been kept strictly confidential. At no time have names of interview participants or areas in which they work on campus (faculty, department, division, unit etc.) been divulged. In addition, in presenting the data, I have made every effort not to reveal the department or unit within which an employee is working through the description of a particular incident or occurrence. After reviewing a transcription of their interviews, if participants felt apprehensive about an incident or experience described, they had the right to have it stricken from all areas of the study.

A signed *Guarantee of Confidentiality and Anonymity* (Appendix H) was provided to all interview participants. In addition, they were requested to sign a *Letter of Intent to Participate in the Study* (Appendix I) in order to indicate their willingness to participate in the study.

All questionnaires, questionnaire data, and interview notes were destroyed and all interview tapes were completely erased upon completion the thesis. Individuals assisting with this study in areas such as transcription have also signed a formal *Guarantee of Confidentiality*.

Ethical Treatment of Participants

While undertaking the research, it was essential to acknowledge the sensitive nature of the topic matter. Because of the nature of the issues being discussed, interviewees or questionnaire respondents may have experienced uncomfortable emotional reactions. It is very important for researchers to behave responsibly and consider possible emotional reactions to their research in advance of the actual research being completed. Seidman (1991) tells about the ethical issues he encountered while exploring the sensitive topic of racism. "As our participant had spoken of his life history, he had begun to deal with the way racism had played out in his life and his career" (p. 77). After realizing the effect that the interview had on this individual, Seidman became more cognizant of the need to be sensitive to the emotional reactions of the participants.

In anticipation of the need to deal responsibly with possible reactions of participants, Janet Smith, Harassment Advisor at the Office of Human Rights, was consulted. Ms. Smith indicated that she would be prepared to meet with any individual who desired to discuss feelings that arose as a result of participating in the study. It was decided that I should provide each interviewee with Ms. Smith's business card and a brochure about the services offered through the Office of Human Rights.

Reliability and Validity

Reliability

According to Fowler (1993), "good questions are reliable, (providing consistent measures in comparable situations) and valid (answers correspond to what they are intended to measure)" (p. 69).

One of the main methods used to assure the reliability of the questions asked is the utilization of words that are plain, simple, short and universally understood. As Fowler states,

> one potential problem is using words that are not understood universally. In general samples, it is important to remember that a range of educational experiences and cultural backgrounds will be represented. Even with well-educated samples, using simple words that are short and understood widely is a sound approach to questionnaire design. (p. 74)

The need to use plain language was also stressed by Janet Smith, Harassment Advisor at the Office of Human Rights. The issue of language barriers and the possible ramifications of these barriers upon the overall questionnaire response rate and participation rate for interviews was seen as a further rationale for using plain language. Ms. Smith cautioned that it is important to consider the implications of language barriers for certain employees. Following this advice, a great deal of effort was made to ensure that the language level in the questionnaire was accessible to those with limited English language ability. In addition, inadequate, incomplete, awkward or confusing wording was avoided.

Another mechanism for ensuring the reliability of questions was to provide definitions of any complex terms. Fowler (1993) states that "often the best approach is to provide respondents with the definition they need" (p. 74). In order to reduce the possibility of the terms being defined differently by different respondents, the questionnaire provided definitions of many of the terms which were used.

In the interview process, reliability was aspired to by attempting to ask the same questions of each interviewee. Fowler (1993) stresses the importance of being able to compare the responses of all participants. "One step toward ensuring consistent measurement is that each respondent in a sample is asked the same question" (p. 70).

It was also felt that consultation with the Population Research Lab at the University of Alberta increased the reliability of the questions asked and results obtained.

Validity

Validity (the extent to which the answer given is a true measure and means what the researcher wants or expects it to mean) is difficult to assess. This is particularly difficult when measuring subjective states, feelings or opinions. As this study primarily measured subjective opinions, the validity of questions was difficult to ascertain. According to Fowler (1993),

> when people are asked about subjective states, feelings, attitudes, and opinions, there is no objective way of validating the answers. Only the person has access to his or her feelings and opinions. Thus, the 'validity' of reports of subjective states can be assessed only by their correlation with other answers that the person gives or with facts about the person's life that one thinks should be related to what is being measured. (p. 80)

There are, however, several ways to increase the validity of subjective questions. One method is to ensure that the majority of questions are presented in a standardized fashion. Fowler (1993) states that "response alternatives must be unidimensional (i.e., deal with only one issue and monotonic (presented in order without inversion)" (p. 91). These principles were kept in the forefront of my mind when preparing the questionnaire.

Another vital consideration is that people may not wish to provide completely accurate answers when particularly sensitive questions are being asked. In order for respondents to be convinced to provide valid answers, respondents have to be assured that "the risks are minimal and the reasons for taking any risk are substantial" (Fowler, 1993, p. 89). Thus, cover letters which accompanied the questionnaires, stressed that the confidentiality and anonymity of all respondents would be guaranteed. In addition, statements were included stressing how extremely valuable participants' contributions would be in helping the University to improve its employment equity program. In keeping with this principle, each interviewee was provided with a signed *Guarantee of Confidentiality and Anonymity* and a Letter of Intent to Participate in the Study which outlined their rights as participants.

The 'face validity' of a research project is also an important consideration. Demonstration of a thorough understanding of the conceptual and theoretical issues relating to the major fields relevant to the topic at hand assists in ensuring the 'face validity' of any research. Thus, in this research project, an attempt was made to address the major theoretical and conceptual issues relating to the fields of multicuturalism, human rights, and employment equity.

Another important aspect of validity concerns the question of how a researcher maintains their 'objectivity' when they are an advocate for a certain cause such as employment equity. The way in which a researcher responds to this question will depend upon their definition of the term 'objectivity.' For some, objectivity is defined as

> lacking...conceptions, desires, emotions, value judgments,...[and] 'interest' in the sense of being concerned about the outcome of something because we fear or want or care about it. [It is also characterized by a]

> non-committal attitude; a cool, detached, dispassionate style. (Fay, 1996, p. 202)

Consistent with this view of 'objectivity' is the belief that the goal of research is to reveal 'reality' or 'the truth.'

Fay (1996) disagrees with this definition of 'objectivity' and stresses that "we are all biased,...within our own cultural and conceptual paradigms, necessarily partial and prejudiced" (p. 205). He suggests an alternate definition which sees 'objectivity' as a process of inquiry which focuses on procedure. According to Fay (1996), 'objective' inquiry needs to

> be fair in the sense that its procedures and the judgments it underwrites be responsive to the evidence as best it can be determined, and responsive to other possible interpretations of this evidence. To be objective, an investigation must require its practitioners to seek out facts which appear relevant to the case, to follow the lead of these facts even if it goes against accepted preconceptions or commitments...and be willing to revise or abandon their conclusions if later work warrants it. [It must allow for critical intersubjectivity which is] the ongoing dialogue among rival inquirers each of whom attempts to understand the other. (pp. 212-213)

Accountability is another aspect of 'objectivity' as defined by Fay (1996). It involves

> taking into account the ways that their investigations are socially positioned...[and issues such as] who gets to speak?, who is acknowledged as an authority and why?, whose concerns are responded to?...To whom is it [the research] expressed and why? To whom [and] in what language is it available? (pp. 217-218)

Including the voices and perspectives of those being studied is seen by Fay to as a positive step when striving to be accountable to the research participants.

Conclusion

I have thus attempted to utilize research methods that are consistent with qualitative and critical research assumptions and principles. It is felt that the primary qualitative methods utilized (questionnaire, interviews and document analysis), were extremely appropriate and complimented each other very well. In the final analysis, a certain level of 'objectivity' was attained as I attempted to remain accountable to the participants, not only by following ethical research procedures but by reporting the data in such a way that the voices of the participants can be heard.

Chapter IV

Perceptions of the Employment Environment

This chapter presents the findings from the first two sections of the questionnaire regarding respondent's background characteristics and employment experiences in general at the University of Alberta. Data from the interviewees' responses to the questions regarding their employment experiences is also presented. This chapter explores topics such as jokes, insults, graffiti, and stereotyping which participants view as being related to their ethnic or cultural heritage. It also examines whether visible minority employees feel that they have to work harder than employees who are not visible minorities to receive the same recognition. This chapter also explores topics such as recognition of education received outside of Canada, accommodation of religious and cultural traditions, orientation procedures, and issues related to English language ability or accent. Employees' awareness of the University of Alberta's employment equity plan *Opening Doors* is also examined. The last section of this chapter looks at the experiences of questionnaire respondents and interviewees in their current positions such as their treatment by supervisors and co-workers and the performance review process. An analysis and interpretation of the findings is also included in this chapter.

Background/Demographic Information

Several questions were asked of the respondents in order to obtain background information with which to evaluate the responses provided in the questionnaire. Table 4-1 summarizes information provided regarding total years employed at the University of Alberta, type of appointment, gender and country of birth.

Table 4-1 Background Characteristics of Questionnaire Respondents

Background	Categories	Valid %
Total Years Employed At the U of A	1-5	9.1
	6-10	29.5
	11-20	45.5
	21-35	15.9
Type of Appointment	Part-Time	9.1
	Full-Time	90.9
Gender	Male	35.2
	Female	64.8
Country of Birth	Canada	9.3
	Outside Canada	90.7

The majority of the respondents were born outside of Canada, had worked at the University of Alberta for 11 or more years and were full-time employees. The percentage of females responding to the questionnaire was almost twice that of males.

Another question asked respondents to indicate the ethnic or cultural group(s) to which they felt they belonged. The responses are summarized in the table below:

Table 4-2 Questionnaire Respondents by Ethnic or Cultural Group [1]

ETHNIC OR CULTURAL GROUP	# OF RESPONDENTS	VALID %
East/South East Asian	38	52.1
East Indian	14	19.2
Middle Eastern	6	8.2
West Indian	8	11.0
Latin American	3	4.1
Black	2	2.7
Other	2	2.7
No Response	16	---

Because of the small numbers of certain ethnic groups in the sample, broad ethnic or cultural group categories were utilized. For example, the East/South East Asian category includes the following nationalities: Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Filipino, Indonesian, Malay, Burmese, Cambodian, Laotian, Thai, and Vietnamese. (For a detailed explanation of each category, see the footnotes at the end of this thesis.) The categories currently utilized by statistics Canada were adopted for this study. Ethnic or cultural background were categorized in order to run cross-tabulations to see if the experiences of one group differed substantially from the experiences of another. However, the information gained from this exercise was not very informative because, in most cases, there were not enough respondents in each grouping to make useful comparisons.

Rather than trying to provide some kind of 'all encompassing' list of nationalities for people to select from, it was deemed important to allow employees to indicate, in their own words, the ethnic or cultural group(s) to which they feel they belong. However, this approach does have some drawbacks. For example, if an employee indicates that they are 'black,' it is difficult to ascertain their background. Thus, 'categorization' can be problematic.

It is significant that 16 respondents chose not to indicate the ethnic or cultural background to which they feel they belong. One reason could be for fear that their anonymity would be jeopardized. Another reason could be that some visible minorities do not strictly identify with a specific ethnic or cultural group. Perhaps they simply did not wish to provide this information.

The data from question one: "in total, how many years have you been employed at the University of Alberta?" was used to ascertain whether opinions regarding racism, stereotyping, working harder than employees who are not visible minorities, lack of promotion and advancement etc., change as employees spend more time in Canada. However, there did not appear to be a correlation between increased years of employment at the University of Alberta and a decrease in perceived experiences of racism.[2] It had been postulated that those who had worked at the University for many years, may experience less racism either because they have attempted to 'fit in' or because they have developed skills which would allow them to confront or challenge unjust situations. However, this was not the case. Many employees who had worked at the University for more than 10 years, continued to experience what they perceived to be inappropriate behavior or situations.

Employment Experiences at the University of Alberta in General

This section examines the *overall* employment experiences of visible minorities at the University of Alberta. The term 'overall' refers to the experiences on campus *in general* as opposed to the experiences within *specific* units or departments.

Racist Behavior or Situations

The data from the questionnaires revealed that 58.5% of the respondents claimed that they have experienced behavior or situations at the University of Alberta which they would consider to be racist towards visible minorities such as racial jokes, racial insults and graffiti. 40.4% indicated that they have not experienced behavior or situations at the University of Alberta that they would consider to be racist. (No Response = 1.1%)

For those that had, the alleged behavior or situations took the form of name-calling, insulting or stereotypical comments, graffiti, verbal jokes and practical jokes. The behaviour and situations can be categorized as pertaining to the following:

a) Place of origin
b) English language capability
c) Accent, diction, vocal projection (loudness)
d) Communication skills (in general)
e) Food
f) Appearance (skin color, dress)
g) Behavior/Mentality
h) Sexuality

Questionnaire respondents provided several illustrations of these types of comments or behavior. Examples include: *"Four months ago a retired employee made a joke and I'll quote the phrase: 'he worked hard like a nigger'."* Another questionnaire respondent claimed that they had experienced a pattern of *"Insulting jokes and comments about my place of origin."* Further examples of comments regarding place of origin are reflected in the following quote: *"Send you back to China."*

Interviewees also shared examples such as: *"There is name-calling...and the word they are using is 'nigger'" (Interview #2).* Another interviewee shared the following story:

> *There was an article - about two or three years ago, about the Sikh community and someone who was an RCMP. Someone started bringing those lapel pins that said 'No Turbans'. I am not from the Sikh community but still, they are from the same country that I am from. They [the employees] were just trying to play games with me to try and show me that they were against these things....I am the only [visible minority] person there. First, I kept ignoring it and I said it was not going to make any difference to me to talk to these people anymore. It was like a kid's game but I ignored it. But when they put an article about Sikhs where staff frequently assemble and where everyone can see it, I got upset. It was an article about the Sikhs with a picture and everything. Then I got a little bit upset. As long as you keep it to yourself, that's fine. I'm not even going to acknowledge that because I can't stop anyone. Again, it comes down to the management, when they see that these things are happening why don't they take action? If the management aren't taking action, they are encouraging those people. (Interview #2)*

Despite notifying management, the above interviewee claimed that management was not supportive. Another interviewee relayed a story regarding racist practical jokes that his co-workers allegedly played on him (Interview #5). A description of these racist practical jokes could not be included in order to ensure the anonymity of the interviewee. This interviewee claimed that this type of behavior has also been directed at other visible minority staff within the department.

> *I saw graffiti which was directed at someone else. We have a lot of [name of nationality] who work for us. Some of the graffiti that I saw occurred when we had the problem in [name of country]. It did not affect me but it did affect some of our staff very, very strongly - they were very upset.* (Interview #5)

Another interviewee shared her experiences. *"I have experienced racial slurs. Some examples were: 'why don't you go back to where you came from' or 'we don't need your kind here'" (Interview #8).*

The majority of the incidents took place on campus with the exception of one incident which took place off-campus. The off-campus incident involved being refused rental housing many years ago. The interviewee explained that he had inquired in person as to the availability of an apartment but was told it was no longer available. Doubting the information that he had been given, he called later and was told that the apartment was still available. One questionnaire respondent indicated that, in the past, comments in a campus publication were found to be insulting towards visible minorities.

Reactions varied substantially to the behavior or situations which were perceived to be racist towards visible minorities. Many of the questionnaire respondents indicated that they struggle to understand what motivates such behavior. *"When people are not educated about different cultures, they tend to feel threatened or afraid"* and *"Most people know racial jokes are wrong. They still make jokes for the fun of it."*

The reactions from interviewees also varied substantially. Some stated that racism is a result of ignorance and fear. *"Part of the problem is that people are afraid of what they do not know. I'm not going to worry about it. They are the losers" (Interview #5).* One interviewee talked about the effect that racist comments have on her. She believed that the comments stem from ignorance about other cultures.

> *I try not to let the racial jokes bother me, but sometimes deep down inside, it really does. I still hear racial comments several times a year. I look at the source and say to myself this individual doesn't know better. Comments like that only come from ignorance and the inability to understand other cultures. (Interview #8)*

There also seemed to be a tendency of certain visible minorities to dismiss, defend or justify the racist behavior. *"There were occasional jokes which were just for fun" or "Doesn't bother me much".* There was also evidence of this from the interviewees:

> *There are always racial jokes - there are definitely racial jokes, not that it bothers me because I can throw things back at people....It doesn't impact on me - it would impact other people a lot differently. I don't see it as serious in any way, shape or form but I know it would be for other people....I know that these things happen - Big Deal. (Interview #5)*

Some found the behavior very offensive but did not say anything. Others told those responsible that they were offended and asked them to stop. Some went even further and requested formal apologies or warned that a formal complaint would be lodged if the behavior did not cease. An interviewee told of how he warns those making offensive comments about possible ramifications:

> *I tell them look, you better be careful about what you say. I say be careful about what you say....I warn them about it. You've got to be careful what you say and how you say it because you could have people complaining. There is one guy, one of my colleagues, I don't think his behavior will ever change as far as making jokes about any group - not just about me. He would say things about women, he would also say funny things about Chinese people. I really don't think he will change. I think the only thing that will get him to stop is if he did something to someone and they filed a complaint. Then he would have to really take it seriously and say 'hey, I'm doing things that hurt people.' It's basically ingrained in him.* (Interview #5)

Some visible minorities indicated that they had begun to feel inferior as a result of the allegedly inappropriate behavior of their co-workers. As Agocs et al., (1992) explain, the psychological impact of such behavior can be extremely detrimental and can effect the morale, motivation, confidence and health of visible minorities. It creates an unhealthy working climate in which visible minority employees feel unwelcome.

One female questionnaire respondent claimed that she had been the target of 'really rude' remarks although she did not specifically explain whether the rude remarks pertained to her gender or her ethnicity. As Ng (1993) indicates, derogatory behavior can have an even more detrimental effect on visible minority women because they can be subjected to jokes and inappropriate behavior not only because they are visible minorities but also because they are women.

One interviewee expressed concern about his supervisor's lack of response when inappropriate behavior was brought to his attention. The interviewee was allegedly told that the situation concerned only himself and the individual making the joke. The supervisor also allegedly stated that he did not want to become involved.

> *The manager said this is your business and you can deal with it the way you want to. I wonder why the manager did not try to help me. Why did he tell me 'go yourself'? If it were happening in the street, then that's a different thing but when it is happening right in his department, he should be responsible.* (Interview #2)

In order to assist managers and supervisors when such situations are brought to their attention, the Office of Human Rights currently offers a course regarding responding to complaints of harassment. In addition, it is important to note that

> the Office of Human Rights (through the Human Rights Advsior, Janet Smith) and the University solicitors developed a policy dealing with harassment and discrimination. It was endorsed by General Faculties Council in fall 1996 and passed by the Board of Governors in January 1997. Copies of the policy are available from the Office of Human Rights. (University of Alberta, 1995, p. 3)

Stereotyping

Questionnaire respondents were asked if they had ever experienced stereotyping at the University of Alberta. The following definition of a stereotype was provided: "A stereotype is a generalization made about all members of a group. Stereotyping is when people are judged based on generalizations about their membership in a group rather than on their own individual characteristics." A significant proportion (51.7%) of respondents indicated that they had experienced stereotyping related to their ethnic or cultural heritage while 44.9% indicated that they had not. (No Response = 3.4%)

The majority of the comments concerning stereotyping were regarding incidents that took place at the University of Alberta. However, one respondent stated that she had not experienced stereotyping 'at the office'. One interviewee shared an experience regarding stereotyping that took place at another educational institution in Edmonton.

Many questionnaire respondents and interviewees claimed that some employees at the University of Alberta are unable to see past the skin color, outer appearance or ethnicity of visible minorities. Comments included: *"Most people make judgments based on outward appearances."* Another comment was: *"I think too many people generalize about my background even though I am Canadianized or Westernized."* One questionnaire respondent claimed that he was frequently classified as 'the Chinaman'. Another questionnaire respondent alleged that *"when the department was hiring another Chinese worker, somebody said 'what? another Chinese!'"*

A common form of stereotyping involves making claims that all members of a certain ethnocultural background have similar characteristics. Examples from questionnaire respondents include: *"Another individual said all people from a specific island are very rude and obnoxious and have no manners"; "Latin Americans are lazy"; "Orientals ought to be smarter or more hard working"; "Third world people are characterized as less intelligent"; "Black people are void of high* *morals," and "There have been comments comparing all Jamaican men - saying they behave in the same way."*

There were many comments made by interviewees regarding stereotyping: *"I have been told that my country is poor, that most of the people are working as 'housekeepers' and that there are not too many people who have any education or degrees"* (Interview #9). Another interviewee shared similar comments: *"I've heard people say all black men are da da da"* (Interview #5).

As stated by Kivel (1996), Elliott and Fleras (1992) and Kallan (1995), dominant groups often create ideologies that allow them to justify their position of power relative to non-dominant groups. The incidents of stereotyping listed, can serve as examples of ideologies that dominant groups develop in order to rationalize why they systematically have more power. Stereotypical beliefs such as 'all Latin Americans are lazy' allow the dominant groups to believe that the world is a meritocracy and that people get what they deserve - that people of Latin American origin deserve to have less because they are 'lazy'. This type of ideology does not lead dominant groups to question their own role in reducing the social, economic and political gains made by members of visible minorities.

Several questionnaire respondents and interviewees claimed that they are portrayed as 'aggressive' if they indicate any interest in advancing in their career or display self-confidence or self-esteem. This complaint was expressed as follows: *"When a colored person has too much self-esteem and self-confidence, they are labeled as too aggressive or too arrogant."* Yet, as the same individual claimed, some visible minorities who are satisfied with their position and are not seeking promotion, may be labeled as unmotivated.

Many of the participants felt that they are stereotypically perceived to have 'poor' communication skills. This stereotype may lead to the belief that certain visible minorities are less capable of working in positions that demand substantial contact with the general public. Comments from questionnaire respondents included: *"There is often the assumption that because one is not white, one may not have a good command of the English language or good verbal communication skills."* Another questionnaire respondent said that *"it is felt that immigrant women in general have communication problems."*

These comments were also echoed by an interviewee who is fluent in English. She shared a similar story about an incident that had happened to her at another educational institution in Edmonton.

> *They gave you a little test, and sight unseen they decided I needed to have English upgrading. Their decision was simply based on the fact that they saw my last name and made an assumption on it. They just put down that I needed extra English lessons and that was based absolutely on the*

> *fact that they just looked at my name and where I came from. And this is where stereotyping comes from. Look how stupid it is. Based on the name alone they made that assessment. (Interview #1)*

Several interviewees stated that a common stereotype involves the belief that all visible minorities are recent immigrants to Canada. Examples of the comments include: *"Being an immigrant means I am not born in this country. I cannot be a hundred percent Canadian and I will always be an immigrant even though I took this citizenship. Many visible minorities were born here but still they are viewed as immigrants rather than Canadians"* (Interview #4). Another interviewee shared frustration at seldom being viewed as a Canadian. *"I had a very lengthy discussion with a person about different people who are Canadians. I was told by this person 'I am Canadian, I was born here'. And I said 'I'm Canadian, I was not born here"* (Interview #8). Yet another interviewee shared her frustration regarding not being considered as Canadian despite obtaining Canadian Citizenship. *"It makes me feel badly when people do not view me as Canadian. I'm very proud of my nationality and my place of origin. I am also proud to be a Canadian citizen" (Interview #9).*

This stereotype again raises issues regarding power and identity. It is an act of power to name who is and who is not Canadian. By not viewing members of visible minorities as Canadian, those with power - the charter groups (Anglophone and Francophone) and other non-visible minorities - are holding those with less power - visible minorities - at a distance. Through constant reaffirmation of their 'difference', visible minorities are made to feel that they do not belong, and above all, are not part of the group that holds most of the social, economic and political power.

One interviewee contended that a co-worker held stereotypical opinions about which careers are appropriate for visible minorities to pursue. After announcing to several co-workers that she and several other members of her family were pursing a specific career, one co-worker allegedly commented: *"you know, [the specific type of career] used to be a predominantly white thing, and now I see so many minorities, Chinese and even people in wheelchairs" (Interview #8).* The interviewee expressed her lack of appreciation for such comments.

Another stereotype involves the perception that visible minorities should not attain a level of affluence beyond that attained by Caucasian individuals. One interviewee perceived that co-workers are uneasy if he purchases something or pursues an endeavor that is prestigious or costly. The following quote elaborates on the perceptions of the interviewee:

> *They are jealous. If I buy a new car or something, they are jealous. Now they are jealous because my kids are going to university. They say 'how come he can afford [x number of] kids in university. It's none of their*

> *business how I do it. I'm not robbing the bank - but the way my priorities are I'm doing that and it is none of their business. (Interview #2)*

If this perception is true, it is important to ask why the economic and social success of visible minorities appears to threaten certain members of the mainstream majority? Could it be that when visible minorities experience social or economic success, they are challenging the ideologies that many mainstream people hold about the inherent inferiority of visible minorities and their apparent 'inability' to achieve or succeed?

The interviewees and questionnaire respondents expressed varied reactions to the stereotyping that they had allegedly experienced. Some respondents felt that the stereotyping was harmless. This was expressed by one questionnaire respondent in the following comments: *"No harm done though".* Another questionnaire respondent indicated that stereotyping made working problematic. *"It is very difficult to work to one's potential when generalizations of this kind are made."* Yet another questionnaire respondent took this even further by claiming that stereotyping can have very real and negative consequences on the opportunities for visible minorities. *"Not a single colored employee has been considered for a supervisory position."*

Another questionnaire respondent felt that action needs to be taken to try to reduce stereotyping at the University of Alberta. It was suggested that educational courses could be offered to try to reduce the instances of stereotyping. *"Education needs to be undertaken regarding this attitude. Stereotyping is the most common way of thinking about other cultures. We have to start looking at individual characteristics."* These sentiments were echoed by an interviewee who generally tries to respond to stereotyping in an educational manner.

> *My responses to these individuals were meant to be an educational process. What I have found over the years is that a lot of people don't realize how rude it is to pigeon hole an individual. Many think that if you are black then you came from Africa. There is so much that needs to be taught about the slave trades and the countries that the slaves were taken to. If this type of education is started in elementary school, it would help the youths of today to be better able to co-exist with people of all nations. (Interview #8)*

These findings suggest the need for critical multicultural education and human rights education programs as outlined by Eide (1989), Torney-Purta (1982), and Starkey (1991). As one interviewee stated, much of this behavior can be seen as stemming from ignorance and an inability to understand other cultures. One component of critical multicultural education involves challenging the belief systems and ideologies that undergird many of the instances of interpersonal and systemic racism. Education can play a major role in challenging and overcoming many of these ideologies. Strategies for reducing stereotyping are explored in greater length in chapter VI and VII.

Having to Work 'Harder' than Co-Workers Who Are Not Visible Minorities

60.7% of the questionnaire respondents perceived that they had to work 'harder' than co-workers who are not visible minority employees to receive the same recognition. 37.1% perceived that they did not have to work harder. (No Response = 2.2%)

One questionnaire respondent felt that *"part of being a visible minority is being inferior."* These type of comments indicate that some visible minorities feel the need to work harder to counteract the negative or inferior images that others may have of visible minorities. As Kivel (1996) states, it is necessary to counter the ideology that visible minorities are inferior. Because some visible minorities are conditioned within such an ideological framework, the response of many is to try and prove that they are not inferior by obtaining more credentials, working longer hours and completing more tasks with greater accuracy than their co-workers.

Other comments from the questionnaire include: *"Not only do I need to work harder, but I am also subjected to constant unreasonable demands and differential treatment."* Yet another comment regarding this was: *"Given all equals (in terms of skill, capabilities), based on the fact that I am a visible minority, I do feel that I have to work harder in order to receive the same recognition."* Several interviewees expressed similar sentiments as the following example demonstrates. *"I feel that I have to work harder than others (i.e. working overtime)....Clearly, I have to put up with more adversity in order to keep my job" (Interview #9).*

Many interviewees and questionnaire respondents claimed that they had to attain more education or credentials than Caucasians in order to be considered for the same position as reflected in the following comments:

> *We had to work extra hard to prove ourselves. I had to obtain a great deal of education before I could be considered for this position. Other people who were not visible minorities did not even have to have that equivalent type of education. (Interview #4)*
>
> *After completion of a degree, I was promoted to a position which has been given to others without any degree or formal education except grade 12.*

Several interviewees reported feeling that they have to be more accurate and careful as far as the quality of their work is concerned. The following quote provides an example of this opinion:

> *If I do something wrong, they'll catch me. If somebody else does it, he can get away with it. A few incidents have happened where someone made some very serious mistakes and nothing was mentioned but if I do a small thing, I'm caught, documented, everything. So I can't get away with anything. So I have to make sure that everything is clear. When I start work, I make sure that everything is perfect. When I leave work, everything is perfect. I document everything.* (Interview #2)

Many participants perceived that they have to work extra hard to 'prove' themselves. The emphasis on 'proving' oneself was constantly repeated throughout the majority of the questionnaire and interview responses. *"We have to prove ourselves"; "My experience has made me much more aware of the fact that visible minorities will always have to prove themselves" and "I feel that I should work harder to show that I am better."* Comments allegedly made to one questionnaire respondent by her co-worker made her feel that she would definitely be required to prove herself. *"There were comments made by a co-worker against me. 'She is not capable of being a [position title]' and 'Do you think she is capable of handling the addition machine?'"*

Frustration was also expressed by those who perceived that even when visible minorities do work extra hard, their effort frequently goes unrecognized. This alleged lack of recognition took a variety of forms such as lack of appreciation expressed by the supervisor, lack of formal acknowledgment in their performance review, and lack of promotions. One questionnaire respondent made the following comment: *"No recognition was ever given by either the [position title] or the manager."* Another questionnaire respondent stated: "*Definitely I have to work harder - even then not being recognized."* The following comment was made by an interviewee: *"I always feel I have to work very very hard to be recognized" (Interview #6).*

One questionnaire respondent stated: *"Few visible minority employees are in supervisory positions."* An interviewee felt that visible minorities work extremely hard in anticipation of promotions or opportunities for advancement but, for many, their goals are never realized. *"Visible minorities think that if they do a better job, they will be given an opportunity. They are still waiting for that opportunity" (Interview #4).* A questionnaire respondent added his feelings about the impact that the alleged lack of recognition was having on his motivation to continue working.

> *I've been denied promotion (once) and a double increment (once) that had been recommended by my manager. Of course, it's very hard to*

> *prove that the reason for the above is racism, but that's what I felt. Therefore, indifference towards work arises.*

One interviewee explained that her attempts to work harder to prove that she was an excellent committed employee have seemed to backfire on her. The resulting perception was that she had to work longer hours because she was somehow 'incompetent' and had to work longer hours to achieve the same results as the other employees.

> *I feel I have to work twice or three times as hard. I find that it doesn't matter how hard I work or what I do, it is always viewed that I don't do enough. If I come in before my working hours, and stay after hours, as I often do, it is viewed that I'm not competent enough to finish the work during normal working hours. The fact that I do this and it is never viewed as giving of myself really bugs me. It really bugs me that I have to work harder to prove myself. I really mind having to prove myself over and over again. I have always taken pride in my job, but it is not viewed as pride. It is viewed more like I'm incompetent.* (Interview #8)

Despite efforts to prove themselves, some visible minorities claim that they are unable to counter the negative beliefs that they perceive their supervisors hold of them.

In addition, some participants perceived a need to conform to 'Western' standards as far as the manner in which work is completed. For example, an employee may have an innovative way of carrying out a task which was learned in his or her country of origin but this may not be acceptable to certain supervisors. This type of belief may stem from an ideology that sees everything that is 'Western' as superior. As indicated in much of the literature on critical multicultural education and antiracist education (Torney-Purta, 1982; Kivel, 1996), there is a need to challenge this belief system if a just multicultural society is to be created. One questionnaire respondent stated: *"If the work is done in a different way, sometimes this is looked upon as not being part of the group or as lacking initiative to adhere to the group."* Although there is often more than one way to complete a task, it was suggested that some supervisors may display a lack of acceptance of different methods that may achieve the same or a better end result.

One interviewee explained why he feels some visible minorities who are also immigrants work extra diligently in their place of employment. He elaborated on his experiences as follows:

> *Despite the stress from being an immigrant, I continue to be extremely hard working. I found employment only seven days after arriving in Canada. I didn't even know which direction was north or south but I got a*

> *job. I have certainly paid my dues. I had to take three busses to get to work and it took me two hours. I left in the pitch dark and came home in the pitch dark. I think I paid my dues and when I got this position at the University, I put in an extreme amount of effort to do well and succeed. When I finally got this job at the University, I was very happy and was putting in extra effort to keep it. I think that immigrants know how hard they have worked to get where they are and will work much harder than most Canadians to keep their job.* (Interview #8)

Some respondents felt they did not have to work harder. Others indicated that they work equally as hard as co-workers who are not visible minorities. Some participants felt that they did not work harder due to certain *personal* characteristics, not because the need to work harder does not exist. One interviewee stated that she is a very assertive person who 'goes after' what she wants and elaborated as follows:

> *I'm actually a very assertive person and I've got where I am because I just wanted to get there. I've never been made to feel, in the environment in which I was, that I've had to work harder to prove myself other than I had to prove that I had knowledge but not to prove myself because of my color. I have honestly never felt that in this environment. It never enters my head that I have to think twice about my color. I just know I want to do something or I need something and I go for it. I've never stopped to think about color. So I guess even if people are being prejudicial towards me, I never see it because that's not my focus. My focus is my purpose.* (Interview #1)

These feelings were also shared by another interviewee:

> *I don't feel I have to work harder. I go, I work and I have never had any problem with that. To be honest with you, I don't think it's true. A lot of times people put that there for themselves because they begin to think of themselves. Women do it too. 'I have to prove myself' and sometimes it gets them into trouble because people that they work with and other people they supervise get to be bitter with them because they push them too much just because they want to prove themselves. But I don't have that problem.* (Interview #5)

It appears that both of these individuals have been successful in their endeavors and have not been negatively affected by discrimination. However, as far as other visible minorities are concerned, caution must be exercised in claiming that one can overcome discrimination simply by disregarding it. This view can be interpreted as placing the onus on the person with less power to transcend interpersonal and systemic barriers to attain success. It is important not to place this type of pressure on anyone. It would be far more positive to challenge and eliminate the interpersonal and systemic barriers that disadvantaged groups face while implementing an equitable reward system for being an effective and efficient employee.

Recognition of Education Received Outside of Canada

79.8% of questionnaire respondents received a portion of their education outside of Canada while 19.1% received their education in Canada. (No Response = 1.1%) Of those who received education outside of Canada, 44.9% felt that it has been fairly recognized by the University of Alberta while 30.3% felt that their education had not been fairly recognized. 19.1% indicated that the question was not applicable. (No Response = 5.7%)

It is positive to know that nearly half of the respondents felt that their education which was received outside of Canada had been fairly recognized. Several interviewees felt that their credentials had been evaluated fairly. One stated: *"I think they were assessed fairly in terms of the transcripts and everything else that came through"* (Interview #1). Another made the following assertion: *"My credentials have been evaluated fairly"* (Interview #9). One questionnaire respondent indicated that *"technical training is recognized and accepted well in most of Canada."* Another stated: *"Because I grew up in a British system and achieved O and A Levels - Oxford and Cambridge - these were and still are recognized for pursuing a university education or credit courses."*

However, there still remains a significant minority (30.3%) of the questionnaire respondents who felt that their education which was received outside of Canada has not been fairly recognized. Most of the comments did not appear to be directed at the University of Alberta specifically but referred to the situation in Canada as a whole. According to Cynthia Caskey at the Human Resource Group, accreditation of professional or university-level credentials is not really an issue for support staff positions. The majority of positions do not *require* degrees and when degrees are included in the job posting, it is most often phrased 'degree preferred.' According to Ms. Caskey, requirements for support staff positions focus more on experience and skills. She further stated that accreditation of professional or university-level credentials is an issue that would primarily affect those who are applying for academic positions. In some of these cases (e.g., physicians, engineers), it is an outside provincial or federal agency that is responsible for accreditation of credentials.

There is also a provincial agency by the name of International Qualification Assessment Service which exists. This agency, which is part of the Department of Labour, assists individuals with having their foreign credentials assessed so that they can access the labour market or educational institutions. They assist with the assessment of credentials for both licensed/regulated and non-licensed/non-regulated occupations. It would be beneficial for employees at the University of Alberta to be aware of the existence of this agency.

The following comments appear to come from employees who hold professional designations or degrees from other countries and who are currently 'underemployed' in positions which do not require such high levels of education: *"Diplomas or degrees received in Asia are not respected fully"; "I believe it is the national policy not to recognize education acquired outside of Canada"; "I had been a certified teacher in [name of country] for more than 10 years but my qualifications are not recognized."* One questionnaire respondent felt that her supervisors did not believe she even had the credentials she claimed to have. *"Somehow I feel that my education was not believed because I was questioned many times by different supervisors."* Another interviewee was disappointed when a position was allegedly given to an applicant with less education.

> *When I came here I had a [name of Masters degree] from [name of country] and I knew that I might as well hang this diploma in my closet. The reason I know that my degree is not considered as equal to a Canadian degree is I applied for a position and even though I have a Masters degree, the position was given to someone who has a Bachelors degree from Canada. All my years of studies were in vain but I did not give up.* (Interview #7)

In professional fields, credentials obtained from 'Western' institutions may be more recognized than credentials gained elsewhere. Since visible minorities tend to hold credentials from 'non-Western' institutions, this can be problematic. Lack of recognition for foreign qualifications is an issue that is dealt with in great detail in the literature on critical multicultural education and employment equity. Again, it is important to note that the dominant group is able to define what is and is not an acceptable credential. Thus, credentials obtained through institutions controlled by the dominant group may be considered as more acceptable or even superior. It is necessary to ask, to what degree is the rejection of foreign credentials legitimate and to what extent is it a way of maintaining the hegemonic power of the dominant group?

One questionnaire respondent encountered an employment advertisement that allegedly requested credentials from a specific province within Canada. *"There was a 'Job Opportunity' posted in our department that said "Qualifications - Alberta Grade 12."* Since this example was provided by a questionnaire respondent, it was not possible to clarify the information. This may have been an example of an advertisement from many years ago prior to the implementation of standards and systems to screen job postings. According to Cynthia Caskey in the Human Resource Group, job postings may request 'Grade 12' but not 'Alberta Grade 12.' Ms Caskey noted that all job postings are screened by a job analyst to ensure that only bone fide qualifications are requested. Care is also taken to ensure that qualifications requested do not adversely affect certain groups. The Office of Human Rights also consults with the Human Resource Group regarding which qualifications can or can not be requested from a human rights standpoint. However, Ms. Caskey noted that the Human Resource Group primarily assists with the competition for continuing (hard funded) positions, so the possibility exists that the job postings for many casual, term and temporary positions which are posted by departments, may not meet the same standards as the postings which are screened through the Human Resource Group. Perhaps this was the case with the posting which allegedly requested 'Alberta Grade 12.'

Other participants indicated that they were only able to work within their area of expertise after having upgraded their credentials at a Canadian institution. Some have not had the opportunity to upgrade their credentials due to a lack of time and or money. They have thus accepted employment which is not within their field in order to 'pay the bills'. The anecdote below explains the circumstances of one interviewee:

> *I have a degree - a [name of degree] and no, it was not recognized. I was told that I would have to upgrade this degree to bring it to the same level as one in Alberta. I didn't do that because I needed money. I was trying to settle down so I decided to work instead of upgrading my credentials. The only job I could get was in an office doing secretarial work. I wasn't too happy, but considering that I didn't receive my education here, I had to start somewhere.* (Interview #6)

One interviewee shared his frustrations not only about the fact that Canadian credentials are sometimes required for specific positions, but that Canadian work experience is often also required. The interviewee elaborated on how he tried to overcome this barrier when seeking employment.

> *I called and said I would work for free as a volunteer to get experience. I have twenty years of experience in my home country but if you don't have work experience in Canada, it is very hard to get a job. I was desperate to have this Canadian work experience.* (Interview #7)

It was suggested by one interviewee that Canada would benefit immensely if workers who arrived from other countries were able to utilize their training and expertise. This interviewee felt that visible minorities could make a considerable contribution to the Canadian economy. *"If immigrants were able to use the training that they obtained in their home country, Canada as a whole will benefit because Canada won't need to produce as many professionals"* (Interview #7).

This sentiment was echoed by a questionnaire respondent who stated that the University of Alberta would benefit greatly if the expertise of all employees was utilized.

> *I believe the University of Alberta could have made much better use of my educational background if they had given me a position with more responsibility than the one I have at the bottom of the structure. I have a Masters degree in [subject] from a [name of nationality] university.*

It was also suggested that there should be some kind of formal program to assist immigrants who have professional backgrounds and who want to have their credentials accredited in Canada. The interviewee who made this recommendation elaborates below:

> *I think they should explain to immigrants how to have their diplomas and certificates accredited. Many immigrants are confused. They hold degrees and diplomas but they go and work as a custodian because they don't know how to have them accredited. In most cases, you do not have to start all over again with your education.* (Interview #7)

These opinions concur with the beliefs of critical multicultural education and employment equity - that the workplace will benefit immensely when systemic barriers to the success of visible minorities are removed. A detailed examination of accreditation issues as they relate to both support and academic staff at the University of Alberta will be discussed in Chapters VI and VII.

Accommodation of Religious and Cultural Traditions

Objective 6.9 in *Opening Doors* calls for an official policy regarding accommodation of non-majority religious holidays. "The Vice-Presidents (Academic) and (Finance and Administration) should prepare and submit to GFC and the Board of Governors for approval a policy respecting faculty and staff requests to observe non-majority religious holidays" (p. 72). According to Cathy Anne Pachnowski, Employment Equity Advisor for the Office of Human Rights, this initiative is currently well underway. During the past few years, the Office of Human Rights has also undertaken several initiatives related to accommodation of religious and cultural traditions. They have sold the Multifaith Calendars which outline the major religious festivals for majority and non-majority faiths. In addition, in 1996, they distributed to all Deans, Directors and Chairs, a list of the major religious festivals for the following faiths: Aboriginal Peoples, the Baha'i faith, Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, Jainism, Judaism, Shinto, Sikhism, Unitarianism, and Zoroastrianism.

31.5% of questionnaire respondents indicated that they felt it important for the University of Alberta to make special arrangements in order to allow employees to celebrate/practice specific religious/cultural traditions. A surprising 65.2% felt that it was not important. (No Response = 3.3%)

What could the motivation or underlying feelings be of the 65.2% of respondents who felt that accommodation of religious or cultural traditions was not important? Does this suggest the failure of multicultural policies which were supposedly intended to encourage retention of cultural and religious traditions? Has the level of assimilation into the mainstream culture been so great that minority groups are placing less emphasis on their culture and religion? Is this the result of an ideology which claims anything 'non-Western' is inferior? Or, is it simply a question that employees may want their holidays to correspond with their children's public school holidays? There are a myriad of reasons which could account for the above statistics. However, there is still a significant minority (31.5%) who feel it is important for the University of Alberta to accommodate employees' religious or cultural traditions/practices. Thus, the policy regarding such accommodation which is currently being drafted would be important.

13.5% of respondents had requested special arrangements while employed at the University of Alberta in order to allow them to celebrate/practice specific religious/cultural practices or traditions. 84.3% indicated that they had not requested special arrangements. (No Response = 2.2%)

Of the 13.5% of respondents (12 employees) who had requested special arrangements, the level of satisfaction with how their request was handled is displayed in table 4-3 below:

Table 4-3 Level of Satisfaction with Handling of Request(s) for Accommodation of Religious or Cultural Traditions

Very Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Undecided	Satisfied	Very Satisfied
2.2%	3.4%	4.5%	1.1%	3.4%

(No Response = 2.3%)

It is significant that 83.1% stated that this question was not applicable. Perhaps employees did not request special arrangements as they did not require special arrangements. If special arrangements were required, other factors, as discussed below, may have inhibited employees from requesting accommodation.

Although some participants expressed a desire to be able to make special arrangements to celebrate/practice specific religious/cultural traditions, there appeared to be considerable confusion with regard to the logistics of how religious and cultural accommodation would work and whether it would be feasible or even desirable. Questionnaire respondents who were in favor of allowing employees to make special arrangements made comments such as: *"I think the University should be sensitive to holidays (i.e., able to celebrate at various times; not having to take time off at Christmas if they don't celebrate Christmas." and "It would be nice, especially Chinese new year."*

Several interviewees who do not personally require special accommodations for specific religious/cultural traditions expressed support for the idea.

> *I'm agnostic but I do have opinions on people and their religious beliefs. It's very important that if they believe, that belief should be respected. This is a Christian country which believes in a superior being and if it recognizes that for one particular faith then it should recognize it for all faiths. Within the context of time it is difficult to say yes, let people go off for their holidays as they fall all over the map and considering that most places close for Christmas they would have to work it out. In principle, I would say yes, but the logistics are another thing altogether. The premise is that this is a country that recognizes religion and they must recognize everybody's need to worship in whichever way they want to and the need for having a special day or whatever to do this.* (Interview #1)

Another interviewee made the following statement:

> *It doesn't really affect me but, lets say I converted to another faith, I would think for religious reasons, that I should be allowed to practice my religion in the true manner it was intended. I should be allowed to change my hours of work for that short time.* (Interview #8)

Yet another interviewee supported accommodation of religious and cultural traditions even though it did not affect her personally.

> *I think religious accommodations are important. I guess if I was of a different religion, I would want the University to recognize it - especially holidays. If I had special holidays relating to my religion, I'd request days off, and I would hope people would respect that.* (Interview #9)

However, as mentioned above, there were several questionnaire respondents who expressed concern about how the logistics of religious and cultural accommodation would be organized. Examples of statements include: *"If every minority requests special arrangements, it will be very difficult for the employer."* Another concern was for the cost that the implementation of such a program might involve. One questionnaire respondent said: *"I will consider the costs involved in order to accommodate the needs."* An interviewee voiced the concern that visible minority employees may not want to work when others at the University are not, e.g., during the Christmas holidays when the University is closed. *"If someone else wants it that's fine but I would not want to be working when everyone else is off"* (Interview # 6).

Some participants indicated how they were currently handling their need for days off in the absence of a clear policy regarding accommodation. One questionnaire respondent stated: *"I usually take a vacation day. Our religion tries to have most celebrations outside of regular office hours."* An interviewee said: *"I try to use my holidays, so it's not a big deal"* (Interview #6).

Comments made by a small proportion of questionnaire respondents indicated that they did not support the accommodation of religious and cultural traditions. They felt adequate vacation time was provided and that those wanting to celebrate non-majority holidays should utilize their vacation time. Comments regarding this include: *"Most workplaces give three weeks plus vacation to staff. If one needs special days off for religious/cultural practices other than the ones already established, it should be done on vacation time."* An interviewee echoed this sentiment:

> *You have three weeks holidays so if you want to take specific time off for specific things, to me that's the way it should be done. There shouldn't be a change in the system as it is - there is enough room to accommodate that. I have staff that work for me that are from [name of country] and they go on the [type of calendar] so she will take Christmas time when we take Christmas time but she will ask me if she could take a certain day off as part of her vacation because it is her Christmas and her New Year. I have no problem with that. As long as she requests it, I let her go. But I don't think we should be building that into the system because you have three weeks holidays after a year of service and after five years of service you have four weeks. Plan around it. (Interview #5)*

These comments suggest that the interviewee feels that visible minority employees should take the religious and cultural holidays of the dominant group and utilize their holiday time for the religious and cultural holidays of their own group. This viewpoint raises several questions. Is such a solution equitable? Are the needs and desires of visible minority groups being viewed as secondary to the needs and desires of the dominant group? How can a policy regarding accommodation of religious and cultural traditions be implemented when visible minority employees have to respect Christmas holidays due to closure of the buildings on campus?

Several questionnaire respondents suggested that they have a responsibility to adapt to 'Canadian' religious and cultural traditions.

> *As a proud Canadian of Chinese origin, I believe that the day I received my citizenship and made Canada my home country, I have made my*

> *choice of being a Canadian first and a Chinese person second. I therefore think I have the responsibility to adapt to Canadian culture and traditions. I should not expect my employer to make special provision for my own religious/cultural traditions.*

"I truly believe that Canada is my home and I do not need to take any time off to celebrate any traditions in my culture," "I decided to live according to this society, for that reason, I don't require special arrangements for religious or cultural matters, " and "I do not require special arrangements simply because I feel that I am Canadian now and I should practice/celebrate Canadian traditions first."

Unfortunately, because these responses were provided by questionnaire respondents, exactly what was meant by the term 'Canadian culture and traditions' could not be confirmed. Contrary to the beliefs of the above respondents, the literature on critical multiculturalism asserts that Canadian culture should not be defined as the culture of white charter groups. Canadian culture and traditions should reflect a mosaic of cultures and traditions and the views, customs, and traditions of one group should not be given priority over those of another.

Several questionnaire respondents viewed accommodation of religious and cultural practices and traditions as unwanted special treatment which singles out certain groups. Examples of comments include: "*I do not want any special favors because I am different.*" and "*Nobody should ask for special treatment.*"

These comments demonstrate that some may have a misunderstanding about the goals of employment equity. The goal of employment equity is not special treatment but equal treatment which can sometimes involve the implementation of special measures. Perhaps these individuals are responding out of fear of the repercussions they might face from co-workers who view employment equity initiatives as special treatment rather than equal treatment. This underlines the need for an educational program to dispel these misconceptions.

Some expressed the opinion that religion should be kept out of the workplace. One questionnaire respondent stated: "*I recognize the University as an educational (scientific) institution and religion should be outside of the workplace.*" Another questionnaire respondent shared this view: "*My religious/cultural practices are personal and do not and should not relate to work.*" The following view was expressed by a third questionnaire respondent: "*In my humblest opinion, I don't believe one should flaunt their cultural practices in the work place.*" Perhaps these individuals don't realize that religion and culture are very much a part of the current workplace - however, it is the religion and culture of majority groups. If religious holidays should be kept 'outside' of the workplace, then the religious holidays and traditions of majority groups should not be acknowledged either. Perhaps it would be more beneficial to respect the religious and cultural needs of all groups.

One questionnaire respondent thought the University could benefit from the sharing of knowledge about different religious and cultural practices. *"I would like to share them with others for personal enrichment and education."*

As indicated below, some respondents did not request accommodation for fear that their request would not be acknowledged or respected:

- *"I don't feel my opinion will make any difference."*
- *"Just to be out of trouble."*
- *"It would be denied."*
- *"I know that my request is going to be denied."*
- *"I don't think I will get it."*
- *"I do not think that supervisors believe in these occasions."*

These comments stress the need for a clear policy regarding the accommodation of religious and cultural traditions/holidays. It is encouraging to know that such a policy is currently being drafted by the University of Alberta.

Orientation

61.8% of respondents attended an orientation when they began their employment. 34.8% did not attend an orientation. (No Response = 3.4%) Of those who attended an orientation, table 4-4 below indicates the respondents' level of satisfaction with the orientation process.

Table 4-4 Level of Satisfaction with the Orientation Process

Very Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Undecided	Satisfied	Very Satisfied
1.1%	6.7%	23.6%	14.6%	13.5%

(No Response = 5.7%)

34.8% stated that this question was not applicable. This could be attributed to the fact that respondents did not attend an orientation when they began their employment at the University of Alberta. According to Cynthia Caskey who works with the Human Resource Group, the University currently does not have a University-administered orientation program for new staff. The orientation is the responsibility of individual departments.

Many questionnaire respondents stated that they felt orientations were a very important source of information, especially for new employees. Examples of comments from the questionnaires include: *"Orientation is very important for a new employee or even for an employee who moves to a new area."* and *"The* *orientation was extremely informative."* An interviewee added the following comments:

> *I'm not a supervisor anymore but I was a supervisor for many years for a very large staff and when they stopped doing orientations I think it was a very bad move on their part because, as a supervisor, we relied on them to give staff that kind of background. So I would say they should go back to that, particularly if they are entrenching some of these equity rights principles.* (Interview #1)

Yet another interviewee stressed the importance of the orientation process. *"All staff members need some kind of orientation. Orientation is so important for a person to feel welcome and also feel like they are part of the team - that they belong....Too often, new staff members are just left alone"* (Interview #8).

It was also indicated that orientations for long-term employees could prove to be beneficial to inform employees of any changes in policies and procedures which have taken place since their initial orientation. This suggestion was further validated by comments from questionnaire respondents who could not evaluate the orientation they received because it took place so long ago and they could not remember any details. *"It has been too long ago. I don't know what kind of arrangements they have these days."* Another questionnaire respondent stated: *"It was too far back for me to remember how happy I was with the process."* An interviewee also made a similar comment: *"There was an orientation but I cannot remember anything from [that many] years ago. I can't remember anything about a Human Resources Development Fund that was there - I can't remember being told"* (Interview #5).

Opinions about the content of the orientation varied. One questionnaire respondent expressed satisfaction and overall happiness with the orientation process. *"Everything was clearly pointed out and all details/instructions were very satisfactory."*

Many interviewees and questionnaire respondents stated that they feel information regarding benefits and job training and career development opportunities should be explained in much greater detail. Quite a few indicated that they were not aware of the programs or were unclear about the rules and regulations regarding the programs. One interviewee stated: *"In my orientation, there was no mention made about the HRDF or the Remission of Tuition program"* (Interview #7). Another interviewee expanded on this comment:

> *The orientation I attended wasn't an extensive one, I think they should expand the orientations. The programs such as Remission of Tuition weren't explained to us. Whoever was doing the orientation kept talking*

> *about things other than what I really wanted to know. Why weren't we told about the courses that we can take?* (Interview #9)

Several questionnaire respondents also shared the same feelings: *"The University does not explain full benefits. If you don't use them, then the University saves money."* Another comment was that there was *"not enough information provided i.e. regarding programs and services."*

One interviewee felt that orientations should include a 'behavioral' component where individuals are instructed as to the standards of behavior that are expected of University of Alberta employees. As part of this process employees should be educated about issues such as harassment and discrimination. *"There was lots of information on benefits but not enough on one's responsibility as a staff member"* (Interview #5). A questionnaire respondent added to that general idea. *"There should be a section on sexual harassment."*

Thus, if one of the goals of employment equity is to ensure that all employees feel welcome and respected, orientations provide a good opportunity for doing so.

English Language Ability and Accent

When asked to rate their level of English language ability, questionnaire respondents answered as follows:

Table 4-5 Respondents' Self-Evaluation of English Language Ability

Poor	Fair	Good	Very Good	Excellent
0%	2.2%	27.0%	42.7%	27.0%

(No Response = 1.1%)

Questionnaire respondents were also asked if they felt they had experienced discrimination related to their English language ability. Table 4-6 below outlines the responses.

Table 4-6 Level of Agreement with Statement Regarding Discrimination and English Language Ability*

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree
40.4%	15.7%	24.7%	9.0%	3.4%

*"I feel I have experienced discrimination related to my level of English language ability."
(No Response = 3.5%)

In addition, questionnaire respondents were asked if they felt they had experienced discrimination related to their accent. Table 4-7 below indicates the responses to this question.

Table 4-7 Level of Agreement with Statement Regarding Discrimination and Accent*

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree
41.6%	12.4%	14.6%	15.7%	12.4%

*"I feel I have experienced discrimination related to my accent."
(No Response = 3.3%)

The majority of questionnaire respondents rated themselves as having good to excellent English language ability. The majority also appeared to have no problem with regard to discrimination related to English language ability or accent. However, there was still a substantial minority who felt they had experienced discrimination related to their English language ability or accent. Although narrative data regarding discrimination based on English language ability and accent was not requested in the questionnaire, there was substantial narrative data obtained via the interview process.

One interviewee was frustrated due to the fact that co-workers and supervisors were continually paraphrasing or restating what she had to say.

> *People often paraphrase me and say 'is this what you are trying to say?' It may be because I have a very strong accent. This makes me feel frustrated, totally frustrated because I can speak for myself. I don't need them rewording or rewriting everything. My co-workers are always speaking for me, I did approach my co-worker because I felt it was becoming too habitual. She replied, 'I was only trying to explain your point to the supervisor.' I then said, 'I don't need you to do this for me.' My co-worker thinks she can speak better and clearer than I can.* (Interview #8)

This statement is a good example of minority voices being muted by members of the dominant group. Despite the fact her co-workers may have had good intentions, by constantly speaking for the interviewee, they are not allowing her to express herself.

Several interviewees felt that having an accent or a less extensive English vocabulary often resulted in being perceived as having poor communication skills. This was attributed to a stereotypical belief that most visible minorities have difficulties speaking English. One interviewee shared her frustration:

> *I was told that I should go and take some English courses, and since I have completed my professional courses in the past and all these courses right here in Canada, what are they trying to tell me? I would not have passed all these professional courses if I could not explain myself in English. If visible minorities can pass those professional courses then what are we saying - that the Canadian standard is not good enough or just that the workplace standard is too high or our color is not right? I was once told for some job that you need super communication skills. What do they mean by 'communication skills?' For me, I think communication involves building up a rapport with the customer with whom I am working. If I can communicate well with them then that is what constitutes communication - not how good a vocabulary I have. Communication involves so many facets: verbal, written and face-to-face rapport. Each individual's communication skills need to be valued. (Interview #4)*

Another interviewee claimed that the need to improve communication skills had been documented formally in her performance appraisal.

> *I have been told by my supervisor to take courses which deal with communication. If you have someone who has dealt with the public for so many years and has had no problems and people enjoy talking to this individual, in my opinion, this person does not need to take any courses regarding dealing with people or improving one's spoken English. This person does not need to take these courses because they already communicate very well. For me, it became a work-related requirement and was placed on every performance review.* (Interview #8)

Another interviewee claimed that some co-workers mock or belittle visible minorities who do not understand slang or idioms.

> *They have even tried to take advantage of or make fun of people who have English as their second language. Support staff often use idioms or slang words which are difficult to understand in order to play a joke on people who have English as a second language. They use idioms like 'pull my leg'. If someone is learning English, 'pull the leg' means simply pulling the leg, not making a joke. This is just another example of jokes that support staff like to play. I think that they do this because they feel threatened. Some Canadians are afraid that immigrants will take their jobs away so they use slang or idioms to make fun of them and belittle them and make them seem less qualified. They use these jokes to put immigrants down and make them feel small. If you went to [name of interviewee's country of origin] and someone was making jokes and laughing at you and you had no idea why, you would feel discriminated against. And this happens in every country, on every continent but it must not take place here in Canada which is an example to the world of a*

> *multicultural country where a major portion of the population is made up of immigrants. I was really disappointed and I was really sad because of this.* (Interview #7)

Khayatt (1994) supports this opinion and states that "laughter and humour, when aimed at a certain person who is not 'in the know' because she [or he] is new to the culture, or is different from the rest of the group...is a method of ridicule or mockery. It is particularly so when the person being laughed at is not included in the jocularity" (p. 85).

Another theme that arose frequently was that visible minority employees could not understand why some of the people at work could understand them perfectly while others couldn't. Several respondents suggested that the attitude of the listener greatly affects whether they understand someone who has English as a second language. An interviewee elaborated as follows:

> *I took some English courses because one of the points against me was that people do not understand my English. I don't agree with this because my director never had a problem understanding my English. When it comes to trying to understand someone with an accent or limited English language skills, it is often the attitude of the person listening which will determine whether they understand or not. How come some of my co-workers understand me perfectly and others don't? How come some people take the time and make the effort to understand immigrants when others don't? I think that it is a question of respect. If people have respect for you, they are able to understand you better. In your life, if you have an opportunity to speak English with a person who barely speaks English, if you really want to understand them, you will understand them.* (Interview #7)

The same interviewee elaborated on this topic. *"I still have this problem when I work in a group. I express my thoughts and I can cooperate with my co-workers but there are some who don't like this, they keep saying, Huh, what did you say? What do you mean"* (Interview #7)?

One interviewee remarked that he is often perceived as being rude or ill-mannered due to the rate and pitch of his speech which is the 'norm' in his country of origin. *"This lady said I speak very fast. She said you have a funny accent and when you get upset you speak so fast. I'm not soft-spoken. Basically, I have a loud voice. They think I'm kind of ill-mannered or something. It's a cultural thing. I can never speak softly like you"* (Interview #3).

Another interviewee perceived that some co-workers and supervisors equate having an accent and speaking English as a second language with being somewhat less intelligent. She explained how some people adopt a condescending or patronizing tone when talking to her.

> *If I encounter a word that is a little harder for me to pronounce, then the person with whom I am talking will make a remark about it by saying 'Oh, is this one of your native words?' or they will make fun of my accent. There are also occasions when people talk to me very slowly. I guess they are making sure that I understand. (i.e., 'I went for lunch - you know, l-u-n-c-h)". These explanations sometimes go even further (i.e., you know when you go to a restaurant and eat something"). This really bothers me.* (Interview #9)

Stereotypical beliefs relating to accent can also be positive in nature, however, they are stereotypes none-the-less. One interviewee who has a British accent felt that her accent has contributed to others seeing her as intelligent due to the stereotype that all British people are quite 'well-educated' and 'intelligent.'

> *I think the other thing with me is that my accent isn't the accent they would expect to come out. The accent is more British and they make the assumption which is totally incorrect that if it's a British accent it means education and culture. This is rubbish. A person could sound exactly like me and be a total ignoramus. It's another stereotype and because it's British, they make assumptions which are totally not true. (Interview #1)*

This is an example of how characteristics of the dominant group can be seen as superior by some.

One interviewee indicated that people do comment about his accent but, for him, it is predominantly a pleasant experience.

> *If I perceive that you want to know about my accent because you have some link, it is different than if you want to know because I speak funny. Most of the time, it's trying to link you and trying to determine where you're from and when you talk to them for a little while they will tell you about an incident e.g., They have been to [name of country]. It's mostly pleasant experiences. (Interview #5)*

The participants revealed a variety of responses/reactions to the perceived discrimination they have encountered relating to their English language ability or accent. The reactions ranged from becoming frustrated to trying to reduce one's accent through formal accent reduction courses. Other reactions included gathering 'proof' of English language ability through TOEFL certificates just in case they were reproached by their supervisor for having inadequate communication skills.

Awareness of the Employment Equity Plan Entitled *Opening Doors*

Questionnaire respondents were asked if, before receiving the questionnaire, they were aware of the University of Alberta's employment equity plan entitled *Opening Doors*. 44.9% of employees *were* aware of the employment equity plan while 53.9% were *not* aware. (No Response = 1.2%) It is significant that over half of the respondents were unaware of the employment equity plan. This highlights the need to take measures to ensure that all University employees become aware of the plan and of its specific goals. As outlined by Best (1990), Starkey (1991) and Jain, Pitts, and DeSantis (1991), employees need to feel included in the change process. When all stakeholders are included and their opinions respected, this will build a sense of community. They can then take ownership of and work more effectively towards realizing employment equity goals. In order to create an atmosphere of inclusivity, all employees need to become aware of *Opening Doors* and feel that they have a role to play in furthering employment equity at the University of Alberta.

For those who were aware of the employment equity plan entitled *Opening Doors*, table 4-8 below indicates their level of satisfaction with the plan.

Table 4-8 Level of Satisfaction with Employment Equity Plan *Opening Doors*

Very Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Undecided	Satisfied	Very Satisfied
7.9%	10.1	15.7	6.7	6.7

(No Response = 2.3%; Not Applicable = 50.6%)

There were several positive comments regarding the progress that the University has made in implementing many of the recommendations of *Opening Doors*. One questionnaire respondent stated:

> *I see around campus people not only of the visible minority group but also with visible handicaps, and I think the University should be lauded for giving opportunities depending on the suitability of the candidate rather than for any other reason.*

An interviewee made the following congratulatory comments:

> *Over the years they have been doing a lot, especially for people with physical disabilities. They have spent a lot of money and time making sure that people with physical disabilities can get around and I think it is wonderful.* (Interview #5)

Unfortunately, the majority of the questionnaire respondents indicated that they had not heard of the employment equity plan entitled *Opening Doors*. Comments regarding this lack of awareness included: *"I do not see any evidence of the plan"*, *"Don't know about it."* and *"I would like to hear and know about this plan."* One interviewee also expressed a lack of knowledge of the plan. *"I have never heard of Opening Doors. Where can I get a copy? I will definitely request a copy - I will talk to the office to see how I can obtain one" (Interview #8).* Others had heard of the plan but were not knowledgeable about the content of the document. The following is an observation from a questionnaire respondent: *"Don't know enough about it to rate or comment."*

Some questionnaire respondents who were more familiar with the employment equity plan, perceived that some of the suggestions for action in the document have not been translated into action or reality. One stated: *"It's all on paper. When you apply for a job you don't get it."* Another comment was: *"Unfortunately, the plan has not been implemented vigorously because of the limitations of the Human Rights department."* A third questionnaire respondent had the following to say: *"For the time being - honorable platitudes. But how does the University of Alberta ensure compliance without rewards, positive or negative?"*

One interviewee expressed a desire for the document to be translated into action. *"I haven't kept up to date on it so I really couldn't answer to it, but all I can say is, if they haven't implemented it and it's just a document, well I think they need to put their money where their mouth is"* (Interview #1). Another interviewee insisted that conducting research is not enough.

> *They talk about Opening Doors, books are published. Although, somehow, we are not taking responsibility. We are accepting the problem and there is a problem. There is a problem but what are we doing about it? Doing some research about the people and just coming out and saying it, is not going to solve the problem.* (Interview #4)

Regarding the pace of implementation of the plan, an interviewee stated:

> *They are too slow in doing things. It was five years ago when I first heard about Opening Doors and they were talking about employment equity. I know I have seen some results in Folio about the study they did - but nothing concrete. In practice, I don't think they have followed it. I don't know the complete details but I think it is going pretty slowly. (Interview #6)*

Another interviewee stated the following: *"For minority groups, there have been plans put in place but how much success have they had in getting to where they want to go? You could look at them and say it's on paper but not much is* *happening about it*" (Interview #5). Thus, the need for implementation and enforcement of the plan was stressed.

Several questionnaire respondents who were knowledgeable about *Opening Doors* expressed some specific concerns about issues that they felt were important. One concern related to equality of job classification. *"People doing the same job are not equally classified."* Another concern related to the perceived lack of visible minorities in specific positions. *"From my point of view, I am very dissatisfied with the absence of visible minorities in the trades. There are not enough black trades-persons or apprentices on campus. Why?"* According to the data from the Employment Equity Census as of December 31, 1995, there were four self-identified visible minority employees working as skilled crafts and tradespersons. Thus visible minorities are not *entirely* absent from this area. However, the data from the most recent (1996) *Federal Contractors Program Second Compliance Review*, indicates that the percentage of visible minorities working in this area is 4.0% compared to the qualified local available pool (QLAP) of 7.6%. Thus, visible minorities are underrepresented in the skilled crafts and trades.

Interviewees also expressed specific concerns regarding the lack of visible minorities in specific positions. *"One of the things I look at as far as visible minorities go is the fact that there are very few [visible minority] academics on this campus. Even now, and I know there are qualified visible minorities out there"* (Interview #5). According the Employment Equity Census Data as of December 31, 1995, there was a total of 1904 part- and full-time continuing academic employees of which 156 designated themselves as visible minorities. According to the *Federal Contractors Program Second Compliance Review* in 1996, visible minorities were underrepresented as Managers, Middle and Upper Managers, and University Teachers compared to the qualified national available pool. However, as far as the category Other Professionals is concerned, the qualified national available pool is 9.4% and the University of Alberta has 15.1%. Thus, visible minorities are underrepresented in certain academic positions but overrepresented in others.

The same interviewee also perceived that only a few visible minorities are being hired as 'tokens' to create the illusion that equitable change is occurring.

> *They still have tokenism. It's obvious. They had twelve [name of position title]s and I was the first [ethnic minority] person here. I look at the [name of profession] and they are woefully lacking in visible minorities. Women are also lacking in [name of profession]. (Interview #5)*

He also expressed the opinion that if those who are in positions of power do not genuinely want change to occur, it will take much longer than anticipated.

> *Some of the things are because of the way the system works. The administration can make these plans but then the faculties and departments have to carry them through. If you have people in those positions who are doing the hiring who don't care or who don't want to [hire visible minorities], it will take a long, long time....It could take a long, long time to see changes and I think that is where the problem is. It's at the administration level because they have to set these goals which they would like to see happen but it's hard to get them carried through. The power stays with the Deans and the Chairs and these are the people that hire.* (Interview #5)

Many appeared to misunderstand the overall goals of employment equity. A small proportion of questionnaire respondents said that they did not support employment equity because they did not support arbitrary quotas. They also felt that the standards of quality at the University of Alberta would be jeopardized by employment equity. One questionnaire respondent remarked: *"Although I feel strongly that this type of plan is good, I think preference should not be given to visible minorities. The skin should not be judged but the education, experience and suitability of the candidate to be hired."* This comment indicates that the respondent may hold an incorrect assumption that employment equity involves lowering standards for education, skill, and experience in order to fill a preset quota. It would thus be beneficial to implement an educational program which focuses on dispelling myths associated with employment equity. As McEwan (1990) states, it will be difficult to bring about meaningful change without educating those involved about the long-term benefits of equality in the workplace.

Employment Experiences in Current Position

A number of questions asked specifically about the employee's current position. The answers furnished provide a means of comparison to determine if problems are specific to departments or characteristic of the University of Alberta as a whole. Although the comments from the previous section (regarding the perceptions of the University in general) indicated that the majority experienced interpersonal discrimination, this was not the case at the department or unit level. Questions which focused on the department or unit ask about treatment by supervisors, the performance review and evaluation process, and treatment by co-workers.

Treatment by Supervisors

Questionnaire respondents were asked if they felt they had experienced discrimination with respect to the treatment they had received from their supervisors. Table 4-9 illustrates the opinions of the respondents.

Table 4-9 Level of Agreement with Statement Regarding Discrimination and Treatment by Supervisor(s)*

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree
44.9%	15.7%	15.7%	6.7%	14.6%

*"I feel that I have experienced discrimination related to my ethnic or cultural background with respect to treatment by my supervisor(s)."
(No Response = 2.4%)

Many respondents indicated that they have had positive experiences with regard to treatment by their supervisors. The following are examples of positive comments from respondents: *"They are very fair, never made a comment about my background"; "My former and current supervisor have given me a lot of flexibility to do my work and sometimes go to great lengths to keep me happy"; "Excellent; it was certainly a pleasure to be supervised by well-rounded individuals with exceptional skill in managing people."* These positive comments were echoed by one interviewee who described how she was treated: *"Very, very well - utmost respect and recognition....I have had wonderful supervisors who have been mentors and coaches and have given me every opportunity" (Interview #1).* These comments demonstrate the existence of many exemplary supervisors at the University of Alberta.

However, it is evident that being in an environment where everyone is 'nice' does not necessarily lead to equality of opportunity. According to Elliott and Fleras (1992), "polite racism is now expressed in somewhat more muted (polite) tones that are less likely to provoke outrage and indignation...but have a cumulative effect...that serves to sustain prevailing relationships of control, exclusion, or exploitation" (p. 59). One questionnaire respondent had been treated very well by supervisors but, in the end, was still unable to advance in his career. *"I have had good supervisors - but always when it came to personal advancement, I am made to understand that there is little they can do."*

Co-workers and supervisors can be as friendly and as nice as possible, but if there are institutional barriers to equality, discrimination will still occur. *Opening Doors* addresses this concern and calls for the University to "review all future changes to employment policies and procedures to ensure that they do not have an unnecessary adverse effect on members of the designated groups...(p. 64). One example is unnecessary qualifications required for promotions. If members of a visible minority group have historically been unable to obtain that type of qualification, they will be denied promotion of the basis of what are perceived to be neutral and fair rules. Thus, it is important to reevaluate our taken-for-granted 'neutral' and 'fair' rules.

Other questionnaire respondents claimed that they had been treated poorly by their supervisors. Examples of these comments include: *"Demeaning behavior, verbal abuse, i.e., yelling and condescending remarks which are not only unjustified but a good example of intimidation."* Another comment was: *"I always hear negative comments made by her about me to other co-workers."* A third questionnaire respondent had the following to say: *"I am never given any consideration by my supervisor in any aspect of my personal, family life or working environment."*

Several interviewees also claimed that they had been treated poorly by their supervisors.

> *I was really unhappy for almost a year. To me, it looked like she just hated me because in the Faculty, I was the only brown person and she just hated me every minute. Every time she would say something which was not nice like 'where did you get your education?' Even if I were to ask any questions, she would get mad at me. I cried for several days it was so bad. I almost thought I should complain, but to who? The people who I was going to complain to all liked her and they all thought she was a great person. I don't know where she is now but I had to work with her for a year almost and then another supervisor came along and she is not bad at all.* (Interview #6)

Another interviewee claimed that he was unfairly assigned undesirable tasks. *"I was given a position which absolutely nobody else wanted. It is an extremely meticulous, high pressure, stressful job with many negative aspects to it"* (Interview #7).

Many respondents felt that they were not listened to or consulted with, to the same degree as their co-workers who were not visible minorities. Examples of such statements include: *"Supervisors tend to favor their own cultural group;" "Ethnic origin plays a very important part with the way my supervisor treats or interacts with individuals"* and *"When she talks, she always talks to white employees, not me."*

One interviewee described their reaction to the treatment received from a supervisor.

> *Eventually, I started to speak up about all the problems that I was having in my department because I had had enough. All the politics in my*

> *department made it so that I hated going to work. The thought of even seeing my supervisor made me sick. I became depressed. I also began to have problems with my health, which I feel were very linked to the depression that I was feeling. I went to the Director [who supervised the interviewee's supervisor] and I told him everything....He organized a meeting to try and resolve the problems....But still I do not feel safe. I will never feel comfortable.* (Interview #7)

While the majority of respondents (60%) did not encounter the negative experiences described above, there is still a significant minority who have. Perhaps some of the recommendations made by the participants in chapters VI and VII such as cross-cultural training could be useful in attempting to improve the employment environment for certain visible minorities.

Performance Review

Questionnaire respondents were asked whether they had experienced discrimination related to their ethnic or cultural background with respect to the performance review/evaluation process. Table 4-10 below indicates the opinions of the respondents.

Table 4-10 Level of Agreement with Statement Regarding Discrimination and the Performance Review/Evaluation Process*

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree
44.9%	20.2%	12.4%	5.6%	12.4%

*"I feel that I have experienced discrimination related to my ethnic or cultural background with respect to the performance review/evaluation process."
(No Response = 4.5%)

The above findings demonstrate that the majority of respondents have not experienced significant problems in this area. However, narrative comments indicate that several felt they had been given a lower rating than they deserved on their performance review. An interviewee made the following comment:

> *My co-workers tell me that they are evaluated as 'very good' yet I always get a 'satisfactory' evaluation even though I am doing more work than my co-workers and upgrading and taking courses. During my first year I always received a 'very good' on my evaluation but then afterwards it changed. Perhaps it is because I tried to better myself and become more educated and they feel threatened. Each year when I receive a 'satisfactory' evaluation, I feel that I am being discriminated against.* (Interview #7)

A questionnaire respondent echoed these comments: "It is not equal across the board." One interviewee perceived that she was being evaluated primarily on a personal level with the quality of her work or her effort being secondary.

> *I'm rated on a personal level, not a professional one. That document [the evaluation form] is not supposed to be based on how my manager or supervisor feels about me but rather on how I do my work. I have asked on numerous occasions 'how is my work? Are there any problems with my work?' The reply was always there are no problems with your work. I would ask 'then what is the problem?' The reply was 'the problem is you.' (Interview #8)*

Another interviewee, who also felt the evaluation was based primarily on his personal relationship with his supervisor, stated: *"It all depends on your relationship with the manager or the management. You are not evaluated on what you do or on how hard-working you are, which is not correct"* (Interview # 3).

One questionnaire respondent perceived that the content of his performance appraisal was *more* positive when it was done by a well-educated 'second generation Canadian' and *less* positive when done by someone from the majority group with a lower level of education. The following quote elaborates on this:

> *When I first started at the University of Alberta and for the next six years, my appraisal was either very good or excellent. My supervisor was a [high level position title] and, I think, second generation Canadian. After that, my supervisors have been [in lower level positions] with low levels of education and of English descent. Things have been tougher. My performance at work has been downgraded to good or satisfactory. Now I am under a [higher level position title] again and things are better. But, after all these years, my attitude toward work has worsened.*

As discussed earlier, some visible minority employees at the University of Alberta perceive that they are discriminated against because they speak English as a second language. This issue arose again when discussing performance appraisals. One questionnaire respondent made the following statement: *"I never received any complaints about my English, yet on the review sheet 'English needs improvement' is always there."*

One questionnaire respondent felt that the performance review process had been used as a means of punishment for having addressed concerns regarding her supervisor's inappropriate behavior.

> *I have received a poor evaluation because I addressed my concerns regarding incidents where I felt my supervisor's behavior has been inappropriate. I also feel that applicable standards of evaluation and performance rating have not been used on my performance appraisals due to my ethnic background.*

Another questionnaire respondent had not been given any indication that her supervisor was unhappy with her job performance prior to the formal performance appraisal. *"I had no idea I did a bad job until my appraisal form was done. There was no warning or slight signal that I was doing bad so it was a big surprise on paper!"* This comment highlights the need for regular, on-going feedback so that an employee is at least aware of areas where the supervisor feels there is a need for improvement. This applies not only to visible minority employees but to *all* employees.

One questionnaire respondent raised a very important point regarding valuing difference. *"Ethnic or cultural background should be given some consideration in these processes. The ability to understand or try to understand that we are all different would make this process fair."* Being 'different' does not mean that one is inferior. As noted by Kivel (1996), there should *not* be *one* monolithic standard by which everyone is evaluated. There is more than one way to successfully carry out a task. An individual should not be judged poorly simply because they are not conforming to the standard way of doing something. The comment made by this respondent highlights the fact that individuals from various backgrounds can enrich the workplace by introducing new and perhaps even better ways of carrying out a task.

One interviewee tried to understand the origins of the discrimination experienced in her performance review and in other areas. She made the following comment: *"Discrimination starts in the home and spreads. Some of the managers are from the old school where they did not grow up with other cultures"* (Interview #6). This comment underlines that attitudes and systems that have been in place for a long time may prove difficult to change. However, there is still need to challenge and change them.

Treatment by Co-Workers

Questionnaire respondents were asked whether they had experienced discrimination related to their ethnic or cultural background with respect to treatment by co-workers. Table 4-11 highlights the responses.

Table 4-11 Level of Agreement with Statement Regarding Discrimination and Treatment by Co-Workers*

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree
34.8%	19.1%	16.9%	15.7%	9.0%

*"I feel that I have experienced discrimination related to my ethnic or cultural background with respect to treatment by my co-workers."
(No Response = 4.5%)

The majority of questionnaire respondents indicated that they did not experience discriminatory treatment from their co-workers. One positive comment was: *"I have gotten along, in general, very well with my co-workers."* Another questionnaire respondent attributed her positive working relationship with co-workers to the fact that her co-workers came from various ethnic backgrounds. *"My co-workers are from various ethnic backgrounds; therefore, I have not experienced discrimination so far in the workplace."*

Some of the other comments made by questionnaire respondents reiterated statements made earlier in this chapter regarding stereotyping or jokes pertaining to an employee's ethnicity. A questionnaire respondent perceived that other employees couldn't help *"looking at you as a third world person."* Another questionnaire respondent felt that *"stereotyping is common."*

Racial jokes and comments regarding the accent of some visible minority employees were highlighted. In addition, a questionnaire respondent claimed that co-workers were "ridiculing my place of origin and making jokes that are insulting." An interviewee also claimed that he had experienced derogatory name-calling. *"Three people who respected me told me that a co-worker has called me a 'f-ing [name of nationality]'"* (Interview #7).

A questionnaire respondent claimed that he was given undesirable tasks that his co-workers did not want to do. *"Some co-workers will try and cheat with the work-load. Job assignments they did not like were given to me."*

One questionnaire respondent perceived that some co-workers, who were not members of visible minorities, behaved as though they were superior. *"Some...are very nice...even interested in our culture. But some employees think they are superior to us and seldom say 'good morning' to us though they say 'hi' to other 'white' people."* Another questionnaire respondent made the following comment: *"I've been told that they [the co-workers] would not have me supervise them."*

Feelings of alienation were expressed by both interviewees and questionnaire respondents alike. One questionnaire respondent claimed that social relations were somewhat problematic *"because workers have their own groups (for coffee,* *special events, etc.).*" Another respondent made the following comment: "*Sometimes I feel I'm alienated.*" A third questionnaire respondent felt that some co-workers were uneasy broaching certain topics when members of visible minorities are present. "*In the lunch room when they talk about Sadam Hussein or OJ Simpson's case, I can see the strange look on some faces looking at me wondering if they should continue or shut up.*"

An interviewee felt that perhaps cultural differences played a role in contributing to his feelings of alienation:

> *It's a cultural difference. For example, 'How are you?' in English is like 'Good Morning', so it means nothing. Even if I say 'I'm okay, but I'm not feeling great', eighty percent of people won't ask why. They just go about their business and don't acknowledge my answer. In my country, when I ask someone how they are, it is because I am really concerned about them. In Canada, I have sometimes tried to answer with a response about how I am feeling but generally nobody is really interested. If someone says they are not feeling well, I try to find out why and then I try to see how I can help them.* (Interview #7)

Comments allegedly made by a co-worker were deemed inappropriate and alienating by one interviewee. The following anecdote illustrates this point.

> *On my first day of work, someone said 'I don't mean to insult you or to be too obvious but I really don't know how things will work out. I hope that we can work together.' I suppose that could be said to anyone starting a new job. However, saying that to a visible minority is not a good thing to do. You're telling that person you don't know if people from different cultures can work together. My thoughts about this are - if you and I both have a cut, the color of our blood is the same, I don't bleed black and you don't bleed white.* (Interview #8)

Several questionnaire respondents felt that some co-workers were threatened by visible minorities in the workplace. "*The general feeling is you are taking jobs away from 'Canadians' but we are also Canadians maybe not by birth.*" One interviewee explained how he has altered his work habits after the behavior of his co-workers led him to assume that they felt threatened by him.

> *Our director asked about our workload and if we had extra time to take on more work. I was straight-forward and said that I could take on more work. By working harder and doing more work than my co-workers, I somehow alienated them. Perhaps they felt that I may be taking their job away. So now I have changed - now I keep my mouth shut and do not take part in any discussion. Now I have changed my attitude. If the supervisor asks if*

> *anyone can take on more work, I keep quiet even if I could take on more work. (Interview #7)*

This type of situation is unfortunate not only because it results in the lowered moral of the employees, but because if similar situations are experienced by other employees, it can impact negatively on the overall organization and reduce efficiency and productivity.

As stated earlier, the belief that 'immigrants' are taking jobs away from 'Canadians' is simply false. Perhaps education about the changing demographics of Canadian society would be able to dispel such myths. People need to become aware that immigration has positive implications for Canada as a nation. Thus, the need for critical multicultural education is again highlighted.

Conclusion

While it appears that in many instances the University environment is welcoming and equitable for visible minority employees, the findings demonstrate that, in other instances, it may be perceived as less welcoming and equitable. This chapter highlights some specific areas which, according to perceptions of the participants, need to be examined in order for the University to become a more welcoming and equitable institution.

Chapter V

Perceptions of Employment Procedures

This chapter presents the findings from the third section of the questionnaire which explored respondents' and interviewees' perceptions of the employment procedures at the University of Alberta. The topics covered are: recruitment and selection procedures, training and career development opportunities, promotion and advancement practices and downsizing practices. An analysis and interpretation of the data is also included.

Recruitment and Selection

Questionnaire respondents were asked whether they felt that they had experienced discrimination related to their ethnic or cultural background with respect to recruitment and selection procedures at the University of Alberta. The following definition of recruitment and selection was provided: "Recruitment ranges from learning about the availability of a position to making inquiries about the position, to filling out application forms. Selection refers to how applicants are chosen after they have completed an application form." The distribution of the responses is reflected in Table 5-1 below.

Table 5-1 Level of Agreement with Statement Regarding Discrimination and Recruitment and Selection Procedures*

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree
34.8%	19.1%	19.1%	13.5%	9.0%

*"I feel that I have experienced discrimination related to my ethnic or cultural background with respect to recruitment and selection procedures at the University of Alberta."
(No Response = 4.5%)

Several positive comments were made by questionnaire respondents regarding recruitment and selection procedures at the University of Alberta. One comment was: *"Having only a high school diploma, I did not find any discrimination as far as education or ethnic background during my interview for my position."* Another respondent stated: *"My first position on campus was as a receptionist. I felt that I was NOT discriminated against through the recruitment and selection procedures because I would not have been chosen for an interview for the duties of receptionist."* A third questionnaire respondent indicated personal satisfaction with the recruitment and selection procedures despite being aware that others may have experienced problems. *"I've heard a bit about this problem. But myself, I have not experienced any discrimination. That could be due to the fact that the Department Chairs are all good in my department."*

There were also comments which indicated a lack of satisfaction with certain aspects of the recruitment and selection procedures. Examples include: *"If you are a visible minority, they like to overemphasize what you are lacking (weaknesses) but not your strengths"; "On previous occasions I feel I was not treated fairly"; "Selection procedures stink. Managers and directors only want their own kind. (No ethnics)"* and *"If you don't have the 'perfect look', you shouldn't bother to apply for high-level positions - especially if you also have a strong accent."*

One questionnaire respondent noted that there were no visible minorities employed in her area other than herself. *"I have not seen visible minorities hired at all in the last 10 years."* This could be seen as demonstrative of problems in the area of recruitment and selection. According the 1996 *Federal Contractors Program Second Compliance Review*, "an employer's workforce is representative when the designated groups are represented in that workforce in proportions similar to their representation in the appropriate local, provincial, or national labour force" (p. 27). When a workforce is not representative, this may be attributed to interpersonal or systemic barriers within the institution. When no visible minorities are hired in a department over an extended period of time, this could be indicative of the existence of structural or systemic barriers. If this is the case, these barriers must be addressed. For example, some visible minorities have historically been denied access to the training or education required for certain positions. Another example of a systemic barrier is when the qualifications requested exceed those required to do the job. These barriers should be acknowledged and challenged through the implementation of special training programs for visible minorities or by realistically re-assessing the qualifications required for certain positions.

One interviewee, who perceived that visible minorities are underrepresented on campus, felt that *'tokenism'* was taking place. The interviewee contended that fellow employees had told him outright that he is just a *'token'* visible minority employee. *"That's what they were saying right in the open. 'He's just a token here'. For the last twenty-some years, I have not seen any other minority persons working here"* (Interview #2).

One questionnaire respondent claimed that he had been actively discouraged from applying for specific positions. *"Actually, the [name of position title] discouraged my application by alluding that positions posted are to be filled by candidates pre-arranged."* Several respondents and interviewees stated that individual departments appear to be given too much freedom in selecting candidates to fill vacancies. According to several respondents, nepotism and the hiring of acquaintances or relatives is allegedly occurring. One interviewee claimed that non-centralized recruitment sometimes disfavored visible minorities.

> *Well, I'm the only visible minority in the department. I'm the only one. Since I started in 19XX, so many times there were vacancies and so many people applied and they see them with a 'different' name and throw it in the garbage. The applications are going directly into the garbage. The applications are coming to the [name of department] and mostly they are the only people doing the hiring now.* (Interview #2)

One interviewee felt that departments are given too much freedom in their hiring decisions and that even if the Human Resource Group (HRG - formerly Personnel Services and Staff Relations) is involved, they do not have the power to override decisions of the departments.

> *Personnel gets involved but it's like a rubber stamp....The posting of the job is just a formality. Sometimes they already have someone in mind for the job but they post it, because Personnel says you have to post it, but the final decision is made by the department. They are going to hire who they want to hire. It really does not matter what recommendation was given by Personnel. It really does happen that way - it's who you know and sometimes your relations.* (Interview #5)

According to Cynthia Caskey of the HRG, it is not the role of the HRG to make decisions as to who is ultimately hired. The HRG assists with the initial competition and, if requested, offers services such as reviewing resumes, preparing a short-list of candidates, compiling interview questions, sitting in on the interview and doing reference checks. Ultimately, the decision of who is hired rests with the department, division, or unit.

Another interviewee alleged that some vacancies are simply not advertised and the competition is handled internally.

> *An individual phoned Personnel to see if they were advertising the job which was vacant in the department so that he could apply. The position was never advertised. By doing this, they deprived this man who was really interested in this position and who was educated and qualified. I think that was a little unfair to him.* (Interview #2)

According to Ms. Caskey, the HRG primarily advertises *continuing* positions and departments are permitted to do their own recruiting for many *casual* or *temporary* positions. Perhaps this was the case in the above mentioned situation.

The same interviewee claimed that nepotism was a problem in his department. *"The problem with the department and staff is nepotism" (Interview #2).* Another interviewee believed that nepotism was affecting the chances of some visible minorities to gain employment in certain departments at the University of Alberta.

> *There is nepotism. [Name of department] is one of the worst for that - very, very, bad. It is really bad in the [name of profession]. You hire my son and I'll hire your son. It happens all the time so both sons get a [name of position]. It happens a lot. Because of nepotism, the opportunities for visible minorities are very, very limited. Visible minorities don't have many other visible minorities who are in a position to hire them. It is getting worse because when jobs are hard to get, people tend to look out for their own more and blame others for taking jobs away. So it makes it harder for visible minorities.* (Interview #5)

Several questionnaire respondents also perceived that it is often necessary to have personal or familial connections in order to gain employment. One comment was: *"It's not what you know, it's who you know." Another was:*

> *I would like to see people being hired by the University of Alberta because they have the education, skills, etc., but not because they know 'somebody in a high position'. I feel that many people are hired because they have 'connections'. I don't like that and I have seen it in our department.*

In some cases, employees perceived that it is beneficial to know someone in a position of power at the University in order to obtain employment. Since visible minorities have historically been excluded from positions of power, they may not have the connections allegedly needed to secure a position. It is significant that some interviewees and questionnaire respondents perceived that members of the majority group prefer to hire other members of the majority group. As stated by Agocs et al., (1992), members of majority groups might perceive that it is important to hire people who are 'like them' so that the new employee will 'fit in.' Thus, there may be a tendency to hire someone with a similar style of communication, body language and dress. If there is no attempt made to challenge this type of social closure, the 'in-group' may continue to hire those with similar backgrounds in social and cultural terms.

With regard to the interview process, one interviewee claimed that there were several inappropriate questions asked. Interviewing guidelines which can be obtained from the Alberta Human Rights and Citizenship Commission, indicate that questions regarding the family or childcare arrangements of prospective employees are not recommended. Despite this, the following scenario allegedly took place.

> *During the interview for my current job, I was asked if I had any kids and if my kids were ill, how would I care for them and how would that affect my ability to come to work. For instance, if my [child] had a cold, was I going*

> *to run and take care of my child's cold and miss work. I think that was not proper....* (Interview #9)

Since there is no way of knowing if these questions were also asked of applicants who are not members of a visible minority group, no direct linkage to ethnicity can be made. Nevertheless, it is still worth noting that inappropriate interview questions are allegedly being asked in some instances.

Training and Career Development Opportunities

Questionnaire respondents were asked if they felt they had received adequate information regarding training and career development opportunities at the University of Alberta. In order for respondents to be able to properly answer this question, it was explained that full-time and part-time continuing employees are eligible to apply for $500.00 per year from the Human Resources Development Fund. It was also explained that the Remission of Tuition program pays for employees' University tuition fees after one year of service. Through this program, part-time employees are eligible for 6 course credits per year and full-time employees are eligible for 18 course credits per year. Responses to the question are as follows:

Table 5-2 Level of Agreement with Statement Regarding Receipt of Adequate Information About Training and Career Development Opportunities*

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree
9.0%	13.5%	16.9%	39.3%	20.2%

*"I feel that I have received adequate information regarding training and career development opportunities at the University of Alberta."
(No Response =1.1 %)

Questionnaire respondents were also asked whether they had fully utilized their training and career development opportunities. The table below indicates the responses.

Table 5-3 Level of Agreement with Statement Regarding Utilization of Training and Career Development Opportunities*

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree
12.4%	15.7%	19.1%	32.6%	18.0%

*"I feel that I have fully utilized my training and career development opportunities."
(No Response = 2.2%)

Another question asked respondents whether they felt they had experienced discrimination related to their ethnic or cultural background with respect to access to training and career development opportunities. Table 5-4 below outlines the responses.

Table 5-4 Level of Agreement with Statement Regarding Discrimination and Access to Training and Career Development Opportunities*

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree
48.3%	15.7%	18.0%	5.6%	7.9%

*"I feel that I have experienced discrimination related to my ethnic or cultural background with respect to access to training and career development opportunities at the University of Alberta." (No Response = 4.5%)

There were several positive comments regarding training and career development opportunities provided by both questionnaire respondents and interviewees. Some of the comments from interviewees include: *"It seems to me that most people are aware because I've heard a lot of staff say you can get this training or that training" (Interview #1).* Another interviewee spoke of how his manager actively encouraged utilization of the Human Resources Development Fund.

> *I think the first time I became aware of HRDF was when courses were offered. Our manager was someone who gave out a lot of information and if he thought it was a course that we should be taking, he would present it at meetings. At that time he would say: 'you could take this course out of your allotment of HR funding. (Interview #5)*

A questionnaire respondent also advised that staff were being encouraged to take advantage of their training and development opportunities. *"With the change of reporting (new supervisor), training is being encouraged."*

Conversely, quite a few questionnaire respondents indicated that their awareness about training and career development opportunities was either non-existent or quite limited. Examples of such statements from questionnaire respondents include: *"Need more information"* and *"As I don't know about the fund, I can't comment on it."* Interviewees also felt that there was a lack of information regarding the Human Resources Development Fund. *"I am aware of HRDF now, but I wasn't in the beginning. You see, the orientation you are talking about, all they did was send me to Personnel to fill out forms" (Interview #6).*

Many participants stated that they were not aware of the Remission of Tuition program. Comments from questionnaire respondents included: *"I didn't know about and have never received information on Remission of Tuition," "The Remission of Tuition program is news to me"* and *"I have never heard of the*

Remission of Tuition program. I could or would have a Masters Degree by now." From the comments, it did appear that employees were more aware of the Human Resources Development Fund than the Remission of Tuition program. *"I know about the HRDF but not the Remission of Tuition program."*

Several interviewees were also unaware of the Remission of Tuition program. *"I could have been getting a Masters degree. If I would have known about the Remission of Tuition program, I could have had my Ph.D. by now"* (Interview #7). Another interviewee remarked:

> *I think it is assumed you already know the information about training and development courses. I did not know about the training and development opportunities. I know about the $500.00 but I didn't know about the Remission of Tuition program. I could have probably attended university as an unclassified student. I plan to ask for information as soon as possible. I have to phone and find out how the Remission of Tuition program is done. I could have had my Master's degree already, with the number of years I have worked on campus. Look how many years I wasted. (Interview #8)*

Reflecting on the lack of awareness regarding training and career opportunities, one interviewee suggested that the problem could stem from the way in which information is disseminated.

> *If I would have known more about the training programs, I would have taken advantage of them. I think memos regarding the training are distributed to Deans and Department heads and if they don't feel like passing them around, they'll not do it.* (Interview #9)

According to Cynthia Caskey, the last *Guide to Training and Development Services and Policies* was distributed in 1992. The revised version of this information will be mailed to each employee individually during the summer of 1997. Information regarding training and development can also be found in the *Agreement between the Board of Governors of the University of Alberta and the Non-Academic Staff Association* which all part- and full-time continuing support employees receive when they begin working at the University of Alberta.

There also appeared to be confusion regarding the rules and regulations pertaining to the Human Resources Development Fund. Several respondents stated that their supervisor had denied them the use of the Human Resources Development Fund because the training requested did not relate directly to their current position.

> *They wouldn't let me use the HRDF because the courses that I wanted to take were not 'job related.' I was refused two or three times....There is no*

> *point. I approached the manager and asked if it was possible if I could take some of these courses on my own. [Name of subject] is also a job related course but he said it was not directly related - he said 'you are hired as a [position title] and that is your job.' (Interview #2)*

The *Agreement between the Board of Governors of the University of Alberta and the Non-Academic Staff Association* states that the fund exists in order to assist employees

> to take training (including courses, workshops, and/or seminars, but excluding University credit courses under Article 32) in order to assist them in developing job-related skills and improving performance in their current positions. Training in job-related skills for future positions may also be funded, at the discretion of the Director of Personnel, where there is high probability of the position existing, and where the employee has demonstrated potential to fill the position. (1991, p. 60)

Despite this, there still appears to be much confusion regarding which courses can or cannot be funded and whether the supervisor has the power to approve or deny an employee's request, even if the course is taken outside of work hours. The following quote from an interviewee illustrates this confusion.

> *The supervisors may say no, you can't take the courses or won't give you the time to take them. I've heard from some that they [HRG] won't approve it because your supervisor or manager has to approve. One of the things that I understand now is it should be shown that it is going to improve your ability to do your job better. And that's the interpretation I get because I remember telling somebody here's a good course, you should take it and when they asked, the supervisor wouldn't let them take it....It is a major problem because I think if you talk to most people on campus, (and this has nothing to do with being a visible minority), ninety percent of the people who take courses have to take courses that are related to their job not what they want to take. You should be able to take the courses that you want but it doesn't happen most of the time.* (Interview #5)

Another interviewee who had similar experiences reiterated that the confusion regarding the Human Resources Development Fund is not just limited to visible minority employees.

> *Over the past few years, there has been a lot of confusion over the kind of courses I could take and over the need for my supervisor to sign my application form even if I am taking the courses in the evening. So, if you're having problems with your supervisor, he or she may not allow you to take courses. I think I would have taken more courses if I would have known more about the rules....I was very interested in evening courses. I*

> *guess I could have taken four years of courses, but every time I wanted to take a course, I would have to ask my supervisors' permission. I always felt that if she wasn't in a good mood, she wouldn't sign it, so why even bother asking. I guess they should have explained more about how to research, how to look for information. Even now, several people who work close to me are not aware of these things themselves. I don't think it's just visible minorities who are having problems in this area.* (Interview #9)

Thus, it appears that some employees perceive that supervisors have ultimate control in deciding which courses can be taken. This was seen as problematic by several questionnaire respondents.

In addition, several questionnaire respondents claimed that specific employees were granted days off with pay to attend courses while others were not. *Comments included: "Only favored staff were allowed to do this. I completed two programs at the Faculty of Extension....I have never been allowed to take 'credit' courses during working hours, " "Most courses I have taken on my own time, but other co-workers get to take them during working hours,"* and *"Courses taken during the day (i.e. one/two hours a week or one day) should usually be re-worked as extra time off work. I do not agree."* The participants contended that some employees are able to have a few days off with pay each year while others have to make up the time or are not permitted to take time off in the first place.

The study was not able to ascertain if ethnicity was related to decisions regarding which employees were allowed to take courses or which employees were allowed to time off with pay to take courses. However, when such important decisions are left to the discretion of departmental supervisors or managers, some employees may be disadvantaged. Article 33.10 of the Agreement Between the Board of Governors of the University of Alberta and the Non-Academic Staff Association states

> Where training under this Article takes place during the employee's regular work hours, his department head shall grant him the necessary time off with pay, provided the training is of mutual benefit to the employee and the department. (p. 61)

Another questionnaire respondent was under the impression that employees must wait for their supervisor to recommend that they take a course before they could actually pursue accessing the Human Resource Development Fund. *"The University of Alberta does provide excellent opportunities to those individuals who want to avail themselves of them. Unfortunately, the manager did not recommend that I take any courses."* It seems as though this employee thought that it was necessary to be invited to take a course by the manager or supervisor. The University of Alberta's *Guide to Training and Development Services and Polices* indicates that this is not the case.

> These courses are usually employee-initiated - that is, the employee realizes a need for skill development that will assist him/her in performing their job duties, or needs to take particular training to put them in a favorable position to attain a promotion/transfer within the University....If the department **requires/requests** the employees to take specific training in order to perform the department's business activities, those courses would **not** be funded by the HRDF....The HRDF...is a professional development fund for the employees to enhance their skills beyond what is required. (pp. 4-7)

It is clear that it is *the employee* who is expected to initiate use of the fund and to select courses according to their own job/career interests as long as they meet HRDF guidelines. If an employee is being denied training which would put them in a favorable position to attain a promotion, this can have serious negative consequences for that employee. Although this problem could potentially be experienced by any employee at the University of Alberta, it would have a disproportionate impact on visible minorities. According to the 1996 *Federal Contractors Program Second Compliance Review*, visible minorities as a group continue to be underrepresented in supervisory and managerial positions (p. 29). Thus, if some visible minorities are unable to access job training and career development opportunities, this may hamper their ability to obtain supervisory or managerial positions.

A further question that deserves to be explored in a more comprehensive study would be whether access to professional development courses has an effect on promotion opportunities. Objective 2.3 in *Opening Doors* makes reference to a similar study but to date it has not been undertaken.

One questionnaire respondent alleged that his supervisor actively discouraged him from taking advantage of the training opportunities. *"I have been denied training opportunities, others haven't. I was once dismissed with the comment: 'Do you want us to pay for your education?' after I asked to take a course on a certain subject."* An interviewee also felt rather discouraged by the perceived lack of encouragement from her supervisor when she took courses.

> *Every time I gave my marks to my supervisor, they were not received with happiness. It's like they wanted you to fail. That's the way they feel. If you are a visible minority and if you succeed at anything, they're scared that they will have to do something about you.* (Interview #4)

One interviewee perceived that employees were less willing to ask for time off for professional development due to the current economic environment. Although this comment does not directly related to ethnic or cultural background, it is noteworthy.

> *Especially now, there is too much work for people to do. Some people wouldn't even ask because they would feel guilty, especially after the last three years of cutbacks. Most people would feel guilty. They are afraid of going to their boss. Who is going to do the work? It would have a lot of consequences because people are not given the opportunity to advance and they are more stressed out because these courses are here. They could help to get where I want to go and I can't take the courses because I don't even want to ask. All this work is here to be done and I can't even get it done. If I take time off, how is it going to get done?* (Interview #5)

Thus, it is important to be aware of the ramifications that an atmosphere of fiscal restraint may have on some of the employment equity goals such as allowing visible minorities to gain the skills and training needed to access supervisory and managerial positions.

One questionnaire respondent suggested that the funds for Remission of Tuition should be extended to dependents of University of Alberta personnel. *"The U of A should allow the Remission of Tuition program to children of employees."* Another questionnaire respondent suggested that the training opportunities should be extended to all support employees such as trust employees. *"More training opportunities should be provided throughout campus for all support employees without any prejudice."*

It is important to clarify that according to the *Guide to Training and Development Services and Policies,* Temporary Staff Services Employees are eligible for $250.00 per fiscal year after working a minimum of 60 hours per month for two months. Term and Temporary employees who are employed for over 12 months are treated the same as a Full-Time Continuing employees, and are eligible for 500.00 per fiscal year. Those who do not have access to the fund include casual trades and apprentices and employees who are split-funded or Trust/Research funded (University of Alberta, 1992, p. 3).

As many of the above quotes indicate, there appears to be substantial confusion regarding training and development opportunities at the University of Alberta. Recommendations with regard to possible solutions to this problem will be discussed in chapters VI and VII.

Promotion and Advancement

Respondents were asked whether they felt they had experienced discrimination related to their ethnic or cultural background with respect to promotion and advancement practices at the University of Alberta. The following table outlines the responses:

Table 5-5 Level of Agreement with Statement Regarding Discrimination and Promotion and Advancement Practices*

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree
27.0%	18.0%	12.4%	14.6%	23.6%

*"I feel that I have experienced discrimination related to my ethnic or cultural background with respect to promotion and advancement practices at the University of Alberta."
(No Response = 4.4%)

Almost half (45%) of respondents indicated that they had not experienced discrimination related to promotion and advancement. One questionnaire respondent expressed positive comments regarding promotion and advancement practices at the University of Alberta. *"I have received fair treatment with regard to promotion and advancement, given the opportunity when available."* An interviewee also spoke of positive experiences in this area. *"When I started in [name of department] I started at the bottom rung and now I am in a senior position"* (Interview #1).

Several employees attributed their success in the area of promotion and advancement to their own personal characteristics. A questionnaire respondent stated: *"Sometimes having a big mouth works."* One interviewee attributed his ability to not focus on discrimination as one reason for his success.

> *I have never experienced any kind of discrimination that would have prevented me from getting to where I wanted to go. Half of discrimination is the person himself and half is the other person. It's hard for people to get to me because I don't allow it. I'm no different than anyone else - that's how I look at it. That's part of the advantage I have over other people. Because if they start saying 'I'm black, I'm Chinese, I'm a woman....I go after what I want. If you have a problem with that, it's your problem, not mine.* (Interview #5)

As stated in chapter IV, it would be far more beneficial to eliminate the interpersonal and structural discrimination that currently exists rather than require visible minorities to disregard discrimination.

The statistics show that a rather large proportion (38.2%) of questionnaire respondents felt that they had experienced discrimination with regard to promotion and advancement practices. One questionnaire respondent made the following comment: *"The job I'm doing now I applied for four years ago, but they hired 'white'. Now I'm working here and doing better than that person."* An interviewee also expressed feelings of frustration regarding lack of promotion and advancement.

> *If I wasn't a visible minority, I would have been identified as an excellent worker a long time ago. I could have had the same job [a number of] years ago, but I wasn't given it because there was a candidate they could hire who wasn't a visible minority. This time there wasn't, so they gave me a chance and I have done better than previous employees. But do they come back and say 'we made a mistake - we should have given you this job [a number of] years ago? As long as there are two people, one a visible minority and the other one a Caucasian - both with the same qualifications applying for the same job - it is given to the Caucasian.....Now finally when I got the job they all said oh, you are so efficient and you do such an excellent job....I had to fight - why do I have to fight? You should have the same rules for everybody so nobody has to fight for anything but when you see the unequal treatment that is the time you fight.* (Interview #4)

Questionnaire respondents also stated that they had not received promotions despite repeated applications. One questionnaire respondent made the following allegation: *"I have had many interviews with various departments and I feel discrimination before the interview even begins so it does not surprise me when I receive a letter stating that I never got the job."* Another questionnaire respondent stated: *"While working in [name of department], I was turned down for many advancements."* Yet another allegation was: *"I feel if I were Caucasian, I would have been an APO ten years ago"* One respondent viewed their lack of promotion as a loss for the University. *"I firmly believe that due to my ethnic background, I have been denied opportunities for promotion and therefore the chance to contribute and grow within the University."* This last statement touches on one of the major beliefs of critical multicultural education and employment equity. Interpersonal and systemic discrimination not only hurt visible minorities but also majority group members and Canadian institutions as a whole. Of course, this is not to say that discrimination should only be prohibited because it harms the Canadian economy. It must be prohibited because it is unjust and, quite simply, wrong. However, as noted by Agocs, Burr and Somerset (1992), if visible minorities would be given the opportunity to contribute their knowledge and expertise, much stands to be gained by everyone.

Several questionnaire respondents stated that they had *never* been promoted despite working at the University for an extended period of time. These comments included *"No promotion for over 18 years"* and from someone who has been employed at the University for 6 years: *"I have never changed my position in the past."* A third questionnaire respondent claimed: *"I have been ignored when advancement was available."*

Gender was also seen as a contributing factor in hampering chances for promotion. *"Gender (or you can call that sexism) makes a difference. It hinders one's opportunities." Anther comment was: "Men are always promoted first and overall are treated with more respect."* As outlined by Ng (1993), many visible minority women not only experience discrimination based on their ethnic or cultural background but also based on their gender.

Several questionnaire respondents felt that speaking English as a second language may have disfavored them when it came to promotion and advancement. Comments included: *"People with English as a second language have much less chance to be promoted," "When it comes to promotion, they always use 'need to improve in English' as an excuse and never promote me. I've been in the same position for more than five years,"* and *"I am a graduate of the University of Alberta. I was working (temporarily) in one position for more than one year and no one ever complained about my English. My boss wanted to offer the position to her friend so she said my English communication skills were not good enough."*

The 1996 *Federal Contractors Program Second Compliance Review* indicates that the University now recommends that selection committees comprise at least two members and that at least one of the two members take the "the training program on human rights legislation, employment equity policies and techniques of interviewing, with reference to the selection of non-academic staff" (p. 52). Perhaps this type of selection committee would be able to provide a more objective assessment of English language facility. It is commendable that the University has implemented steps in order to avoid situations whereby the biases of one individual could influence the decision of who to promote.

Several questionnaire respondents indicated that promotions were unfairly allocated on the basis of personal or familial relationships. *"Since the promotions can be handed out to friends and relatives without the approval of Personnel, others do not stand much of a chance to advance in the department."; "I think sometimes favoritism plays a role."; "Sometimes it's not what you know it's who you know."* Another interviewee perceived that she has been pigeon-holed as a worker at a certain level and is unlikely to be allowed to surpass that level.

> *I don't think that they will ever consider me for a higher level than what I am. It doesn't matter how many degrees or how many certificates I have because they have put me in a low level in their minds. I am really hoping to leave the University and show everyone that I can do better.* (Interview #9)

One interviewee felt that she had been actively discouraged from seeking promotions.

> *I should be in a more administrative position - I am a [position title] but it is not an administrative position and when I apply they sometimes say I should not apply. I feel like shaking the person and saying 'tell me why?'....Sometimes I feel that I am qualified and more than fifty percent of the time I know that I am qualified. Well, it's really discouraging - it makes me feel like maybe I don't know enough - like maybe I'm not good enough. Why do I have to go through this? Sometimes I am so discouraged that I don't want to apply again. (Interview #6)*

The above statement demonstrates that constant discouragement can have a strong psychological impact on members of visible minorities. As stated by Agocs et al., (1992), such situations can create a crisis of confidence, lack of self-esteem and lowered expectations. Several interviewees also felt that their morale had been effected after being turned down for promotions.

> *So I was given the idea that there is no place for me. I should quit. I should go. I was told over and over 'if you are so unhappy, why are you staying with the University? You could do so much better. Why are you staying with the University? So this is what I was told from the top of the bureaucracy to the bottom. I said I can quit, I can leave, that would be easy to do. But I wanted to do something. I wanted to see why I would not be promoted. My education has taught me that if I leave the problem, it will not be solved.* (Interview #4)

One interviewee claimed that she was never provided with a concrete rationale for her lack of success when applying for promotion. She contended that the only rationale given was that she was 'not suitable'. *"I did not get the job, I was told at the interview that they did not think I was 'suitable' for the position. The word 'suitable' could not be explained when I asked both parties interviewing me to explain it"* (Interview #8).

One comment from a questionnaire respondent indicated that she may misunderstand the goals of employment equity. It can be assumed from the following comment that the respondent believes that employment equity involves promoting visible minorities solely to meet preset quotas without any concern for experience, skill or education. *"Promotions should be given based on knowledge and education, not ethnic origin."* As stated in Chapter IV, there is a need for an educational program with a focus on employment equity in order to dispel some of the myths about employment equity. This concern will be addressed in the recommendations sections of Chapters VI and VII.

Downsizing

Questionnaire respondents were asked whether they felt they had experienced discrimination related to their ethnic or cultural background with respect to downsizing practices. The table below outlines the opinions provided.

Table 5-6 Level of Agreement with Statement Regarding Discrimination and Downsizing Practices*

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree
43.8%	19.1%	19.1%	3.4%	7.9%

*"I feel that I have experienced discrimination related to my ethnic or cultural background with respect to downsizing practices at the University of Alberta."
(No Response = 6.7%)

Many questionnaire respondents made positive comments regarding this topic. Examples include: *"I have received promotions many times during downsizing. I was not affected," "I am still here despite downsizing"* and *"My department makes lay-off decisions based on the needs of the department. I do not feel they go by ethnic or cultural group."*

Several respondents indicated that they could not comment on downsizing because they had not experienced it directly within their working environment. Others indicated that discrimination could not be a factor because lay-offs are based on seniority. This perception does not take into consideration the relationship between downsizing policies which are based on seniority and equity. It is important to understand that such policies *can* disproportionately disadvantage visible minorities. Since many visible minorities are recent immigrants who have only worked for a limited number of years, they may not have enough seniority to prevent them from being laid-off. In addition, many visible minorities who are second and third generation Canadians may be affected by seniority-based downsizing policies. Since many visible minorities are only recently becoming employed in areas where they have previously been absent, such as supervisory positions, they would not have a substantial amount of seniority. Thus, they may also be disproportionately affected by lay-offs.

One questionnaire respondent stated that she felt lay-offs should *not* be based on seniority. *"I would like to see that when downsizing is taking place, it will take into consideration the educational background, the experience, the dedication that we put into our jobs. I don't like the fact that I could be laid-off because I don't have seniority."*

Some participants felt that downsizing had negatively affected a disproportionate number of visible minority employees. One questionnaire respondent perceived that there have been a substantial number of lay-offs in areas where there are large numbers of visible minority employees. *"It seems to me the fact that Food Services and Janitorial Services have so far been the most affected areas, reflects the trend in downsizing at the University of Alberta. The lowest paid people; lots of immigrants. Am I wrong?"* It is important to note that the 1996 *Federal Contractors Program Second Compliance Review* indicated that, in recent years, "members of visible minorities were significantly disproportionately affected by lay-offs" (p. 39).

During downsizing, one interviewee perceived that if a Caucasian employee is let go rather than a visible minority employee, this can lead to tension within a department. The following quote was provided by a visible minority employee who was not personally affected by the downsizing that resulted in some of his colleagues, who were not visible minorities, being laid-off.

> *The crucial point for me was [a number of] years ago when we were facing lay-offs - [a certain] percent of our department because of cutbacks and then it was a real war. It was a war and for example, I've been called a 'f-ing' [name of nationality]....Some people said 'why does he get to keep his position and I have to go? Why? I was born here and schooled here and so on and so on.' They did not understand that my position was my profession, not where I was born. (Interview #7)*

Again, the need for an educational program is evident. Such an educational program could challenge the belief systems of certain people which see immigrants as less deserving of employment than members of the majority group. Such an educational program could also challenge people's definition of what constitutes a Canadian as well as indicate how Canada benefits from immigration.

Several respondents expressed their dissatisfaction with certain aspects of the downsizing process. One stated that he would have appreciated receiving more information regarding downsizing goals and procedures. Respondents also indicated that they felt changes were implemented too rapidly. *"Employees should be given more time and information about the changes. Integration into the new organization is done too fast."*

Conclusion

This chapter presented the findings from the third section of the questionnaire which explored questionnaire respondents' and interviewees' perceptions of the employment procedures at the University of Alberta. While the majority did not perceive that they had experienced discrimination, there was a significant minority who did. Promotion and advancement practices appeared to be an area of specific concern. There is a need to address the issues raised by these employees and take the necessary steps to ensure that the University is perceived as equitable by all employees.

Chapter VI

Recommendations of Visible Minority Support Staff

This chapter provides a summary of recommendations for change provided by questionnaire respondents and interviewees who were asked whether they felt the University of Alberta needs to make changes to create a more equitable (fair) employment environment for visible minority employees. Over half (51.7%) of questionnaire respondents felt that changes to create a more equitable environment *were* necessary. 36% felt that that changes were *not* necessary and 12.3% did not respond to this question. Where applicable, an analysis and interpretation of the recommendations is provided.

The first section outlines the educational programs which were suggested including: diversity training, assertiveness training and conflict management training. An educational program about harassment, discrimination and racism was also suggested along with employment equity education and an educational program or advisory services for recent immigrants. The second area involves issue-specific recommendations regarding such topics as treatment by supervisors, English language ability and accent, accommodation and maintenance of religious and cultural traditions, recruitment and selection, training and development, promotion and advancement and the need for more visible minorities in supervisory or managerial positions. The third section introduces recommendations regarding the change process itself such as the need to set targets, to be accountable, and to include all employees in the change process. Enlarging the scope of the employment equity study was also suggested.

Educational Programs

Diversity (Cross-Cultural/Race-Relations) Training

Diversity training which involves looking at race-relations and cross-cultural issues was perhaps the most widely-made recommendation. A similar recommendation has also been made in *Opening Doors*. Objective 3.5 states:

> PSSR [HRG] and the training staff in the office of the Vice-President (Academic), in consultation with the Office of Human Rights, should design and deliver an ongoing series of workshops on valuing diversity in the workplace. Some workshops should address the needs of supervisors and managers, while others should be directed at those who have no supervisory or managerial responsibilities. (p. 64)

Examples of recommendations made by questionnaire respondents include: *"All mangers should be trained to deal with ethnic issues"* and *"Management and supervisory personnel should receive adequate training in dealing with visible minority employees."*

One questionnaire respondent felt that the overall environment at the University could positively change as a result of diversity training. She believed that diversity training would encourage people who are in positions of power to confront possible biases or prejudices which may affect their decisions about who to hire or promote. *"I feel that the University can improve and provide a fair/equitable environment by ensuring that people who have the power to influence hiring/advancement are properly trained to be open-minded and fair."*

Although some recommended the training specifically for managers or supervisors, others recommended it for front-line receptionists. It became clear that questionnaire respondents felt this training would be beneficial for all employees at the University of Alberta, including visible minority employees. The following recommendations specifically outline the various groups that would benefit from diversity or cross-cultural training.

One interviewee felt that people who are in positions of power, such as managers, would benefit from diversity training.

> *The managers should take some courses in which they should consider that all human beings are equal and they should treat everybody the same way that they would like to be treated themselves....There should be behavioral courses regarding human behavior or psychology. (Interview #6)*

Another interviewee felt that supervisors as well as managers should take diversity training.

> *Supervisors and managers must have this training. If you are in Human Resources you should know how to deal with everyone and be non-judgmental. You should not show any form of prejudice or preference for one person over another. We should all be equal. (Interview #8)*

A questionnaire respondent agreed with the opinion stated above. *"The major issue is training department heads and supervisors at all levels in diversity issues."*

An interviewee made the observation that diversity training is crucial for front-line staff and receptionists. She elaborated as follows:

> *When a person first comes on campus, either for an interview or to inquire about a job or pick up a form, the first contact made must be friendly, courteous and helpful. The first place people contact regarding employment is very important. If the individual has any form of racial feelings toward any minority group, that individual should have some form of training to help them deal with people of different ethnic origin. Front-line staff and receptionists are responsible for the department so they must have training too. (Interview #8)*

One interviewee felt that, ideally, this training should be mandatory *prior* to people assuming positions of power such as managerial or supervisory positions. *"Before they become managers they should go through some process. In that process, there should be something they have to take - for example courses regarding how they would deal with visible minorities"* (Interview # 4).

Another questionnaire respondent felt that attendance at diversity training programs should *not* be optional if it is to be effective. *"Educate the managers. Make them aware of workplace diversity. Provide them [with] a compulsory training period. If it is optional, most will not attend."*

One questionnaire respondent indicated that 'attitudes' need to be addressed. *"Attitudes have to change, especially at the intermediate supervisory level. I don't know if that can be done though."* Part of 'addressing attitudes' could involve exploring the various stereotypes that are held about 'the other'. Some critics of diversity training feel that if attitudinal change is the sole focus, the discrimination that is built into the very system itself will not be addressed. It *is* very important to address systemic discrimination. However, this does not have to preclude challenging the beliefs and attitudes inherent in interpersonal racism. Striving for attitudinal change in conjunction with systemic change is most effective and the two do not have to be mutually exclusive.

Interviewees also called for diversity or cross-cultural training. They even provided suggestions as to who could organize or administer this training.

> *I think there really needs to be a concerted, comprehensive diversity training program....When you consider the ratio of minorities to the general population, there still is an imbalance in the minorities. I think it behooves the rest of the population to develop an understanding. The education needs to start on the other side of the scale, not just with the minorities. I think the University needs a really good comprehensive...diversity program. I would imagine that the Office of Human Rights would organize this, in conjunction with a group at large on campus. (Interview #1)*

As part of this cross-cultural training, one interviewee suggested that encouraging staff to share their cultural and religious traditions builds understanding of and appreciation for difference. The following quote elaborates on the kind of sharing that currently takes place in a specific area on campus.

> *When it's Chinese New Year, the Chinese staff will bring things in, when it's Diwali (Deepavali) the Hindu staff sometimes bring things in. Mostly they are respected because of their culture and their background so they don't feel ashamed or afraid to bring in stuff for Chinese New Year or whatever for the simple reason that it has been accepted and recognized.* (Interview # 1)

This type of sharing definitely has value in that it encourages the appreciation of other cultures. However, it is important not to rely solely on these types of initiatives to reduce workplace inequality. Focusing only on 'song and dance' aspects of other cultures does not address systemic discrimination which is built into apparently 'neutral' regulations and practices of institutions. According to Sleeter (1996), Fleras (1992), and McLaren (1995), it can also encourage a kind of superficial multiculturalism which may not develop into deeper intercultural understanding.

One interviewee suggested that diversity training could also encourage valuing the strengths and special contributions that visible minorities can bring to the workplace.

> *You have to understand the diversity of the total population which is working for a living. There would be certain things which would be different, but the visible minorities would have some strengths too, which other Caucasian persons would not have.* (Interview # 4)

A questionnaire respondent also recommended that there be an appreciation for special skills of many visible minority employees such as their ability to speak other languages. *"Recognize multi-lingual employees. Educate employees about other cultures, training and sharing cultures."*

Assertiveness Training

Questionnaire respondents and interviewees recommended that visible minority employees take assertiveness training. A questionnaire respondent made the following comment: *"Because of my background, I am a very outspoken and assertive woman and this has helped me advance to where I am now. I would also suggest that visible minorities - especially women - be encouraged to take some type of assertiveness training."* An interviewee stated:

> *With assertiveness, you look in a clear-headed way at your purpose and that is what you focus on. Whereas the other way, you're trying to be defensive and counteracting any kind of racial prejudice so that does deflect you from your purpose and you tend to react emotionally rather than rationally. I think the whole thing of being equal is to help people speak up for themselves - it's so crucial.* (Interview #1)

However, it is important that assertiveness training not be used by visible minorities as a mechanism for coping with or 'overcoming' racism. It would not be sufficient to provide visible minorities with assertiveness training without confronting and challenging interpersonal and systemic discrimination. Assertiveness training would be appropriate as long as other complementary actions are being taken to address interpersonal and systemic racism.

Conflict Management/Resolution Training

Training for all University staff in how to successfully manage and resolve conflict was also recommended by questionnaire respondents and interviewees. One questionnaire respondent suggested that the Office of Human Rights *"conduct informal sessions with all Faculties to obtain feedback and provide better information as to how to prevent or resolve conflicts."*

One interviewee expressed dissatisfaction that conflicts frequently result in formal complaints being lodged prior to attempts at resolution. (Interview #3) Another interviewee expressed frustration at not knowing where to turn or how to handle a situation of conflict. He was thus unable to resolve the situation and unnecessarily experienced substantial discomfort for a prolonged period of time.

> *I had the feeling that I shouldn't say anything because maybe it would make things worse for me. I didn't want to be labeled as a troublemaker. I did not want to make waves or be a tattle tale. I knew that if I went to the Human Rights there would be some kind of investigation and I didn't want to do it to my directors whom I truly respect. As well, some of the other co-workers whom I respect would also be affected. If I brought this situation to the Office of Human Rights, I would have to go public and support my point and that would be a real mess. I did not want it to indirectly hurt the director because he has always been so good to me.* (Interview #7)

It is unfortunate that this individual was not aware of the informal conflict resolution mechanisms. All complaints do not necessarily have to result in a formal 'investigation.' As outlined in Chapter VII, there are many non-adversarial and informal ways to approach a situation of conflict. It is clear that all employees at all levels could benefit from courses or workshops regarding conflict management or by knowing about the informal and formal avenues for conflict resolution.

Education Regarding Harassment, Discrimination and Racism

A further recommendation involved creating educational programs which address issues such as harassment, discrimination and racism. Although the Office of Human Rights currently offers seminars on these topics, the fact that some respondents suggested creating such educational programs suggests that all employees may not be aware of them.

One questionnaire respondent recommended *"an education program."* The same respondent also made the following recommendation: *"Define what harassment is i.e., innocent jokes, slurs, etc."* Another questionnaire respondent made this statement: *"Educate deans, heads of departments and faculty about appropriate behavior by developing programs dealing with discrimination and harassment."* A third respondent stated that *"nothing has really been done to educate or discipline supervisors about their inappropriate behavior."*

The importance of such an educational program for *all* employees was stressed by a questionnaire respondent who made the following comment. *"Educate all employees - especially the management - in the awareness of racial discrimination in order to ensure an equal and fair employment environment."*

The need to educate individuals about the different forms of racism also became apparent. Some respondents felt that whether visible minorities experience racism or not depends on their perception of themselves, others, or the situation. The following is an example of such a comment from a questionnaire respondent.

> *I do not consider myself different than the rest of my co-workers. Therefore discrimination does not cross my mind. I feel that if one thinks about discrimination all the time, one would start feeling it. One's attitude makes quite a difference.*

Apparently this respondent feels that if she 'tunes racism out' or ignores it, it will not affect her. Although this may hold true for interpersonal racism, it will not eliminate systemic racism. This type of belief tends to place the responsibility on visible minorities to ensure that the behavior of others does not affect them. Perhaps courses regarding racism could help to reassure visible minority employees that it is not their responsibility to learn to cope with or disregard racism.

The success or failure of visible minority employees should not depend on their ability to disregard certain behaviors or situations. Furthermore, developing a 'thick skin' does not counteract the effects of systemic discriminatory barriers nor does it consider the potential emotional damage that may be caused to the visible minority employee.

Another questionnaire respondent stated: *"I think one has to look beyond what you are and rise above the few idiots that you may encounter in the workplace. Life is too short to worry about the small stuff."* The above view that racism is the workings of a 'few idiots' which visible minorities need to 'look beyond' or rise above, tends to disregard the fact that racism can be systemic. Since systemic racism is difficult to pinpoint, it is something that is difficult to 'rise above' or ignore.

An interviewee suggested that the Office of Human Rights should interact with each department to ensure that all employees are aware of what constitutes discrimination, racism and harassment.

> *I think the Office of Human Rights should visit each department or a group of departments and have an informal information session which deals with discrimination and harassment. Someone from the Office of Human Rights could be invited to give a presentation during a staff meeting. I hear about workshops and programs about discrimination and harassment but I have never even known what those workshops and programs are about. The workshops should be open to whomever wants to attend and if they would advertise them more that would be better. (Interview #9)*

Employment Equity Education

It became evident that an educational program which outlines the main tenets of employment equity is necessary. Several responses from questionnaire respondents indicated that there are some misperceptions about what employment equity is striving to achieve. An educational program would hopefully be able to clarify some of the misunderstandings while building support for the goals of employment equity.

Comments which highlighted the need for more education regarding employment equity included the following from a questionnaire respondent: *"Qualifications for any jobs should be considered first, regardless of race and cultural background."* Another questionnaire respondent stated:

> *I am aware that we don't live in a fair world, but we must try to make it a better place to live in. In the University's case, I would like to see that we are working together for a better society, but people must be hired according to knowledge, expertise and education. It's just a thought!*

A third questionnaire respondent indicated that they thought employment equity involves filling quotas based solely on ethnocultural background with no consideration given to qualifications, skill or experience. The following quote suggests a belief that employment equity involves 'special treatment' or 'reverse discrimination' based solely on ethnocultural background.

> *I do not want special treatment because of my origin. I believe that a fair/equitable employment environment means my employer can look beyond my visible difference and treat me like anyone else. I'd like to think that I am hired/promoted/rewarded based entirely on my own merit. It is important that I am hired because I am the best candidate applying for the job and that I am promoted because I have done a great job. I wouldn't want to be hired to satisfy some kind of preset quota for visible minorities. Reverse discrimination is just as bad.*

Employment equity does *not* involve 'special treatment' or 'reverse discrimination' based solely on ethnocultural background or the filling of preset quotas with no concern for skill, education or experience. As stated by Jain, Pitts and DeSantis (1991), employment equity advocates the hiring and promotion of *qualified* visible minorities who have historically been disadvantaged due to discrimination. In order to gain the support of the University community, it is necessary to clarify the above-mentioned misunderstandings and provide more accurate information about the goals of employment equity.

Two questionnaire respondents made comments which indicate that they may not view employment equity as a positive program. *"More attention will create a negative reaction."* and *"I do not think that we need to overemphasize on this issue."* It appeared that certain visible minorities see employment equity as something that could be personally harmful. Perhaps some visible minorities are experiencing negative reactions from their co-workers due to employment equity initiatives. Thus, it is not surprising that some visible minorities may feel uncomfortable. Visible minorities do not want to be singled out for negative treatment from co-workers who incorrectly perceive employment equity as 'reverse discrimination.' Therefore, educational programs for all staff are vital. When visible minorities understand employment equity and see that their co-workers who are not visible minorities understand and accept it, they will likely be more apt to welcome it themselves.

Educational Program For Recent Immigrants

Another recommendation which was put forth involved educational sessions for recent immigrants. An interviewee who had experienced extreme culture shock upon arriving in Canada felt that any courses which would assist immigrants in more easily adapting to life in Canada would prove beneficial. These courses would allow immigrants to focus on being productive members of society rather than having to struggle just to handle day-to-day tasks. The following example was provided:

> *Immigrants need to be told about taxation, financial issues and about life in general in Canada. They are not being taught about life in Canada. In the ESL classes we read some stupid thing about John and Mary sitting in a train. These ESL courses should focus on real life....Immigrants have no idea about tax and some of them are making mistakes and the taxation department thinks that they are trying to deceive them. Taxation is different in each country. They need to explain to immigrants how to claim - what is covered and what can be claimed. The University should help the English program instructors so they may review what to tell new immigrants in classes.* (Interview #7)

Opening Doors does make reference to the need to "establish advisory services for the integration and accommodation of...recent immigrants" (p. 72). However, according to the 1996 *Federal Contractors Program Second Compliance Review*, there are not yet any centrally administered advisory services available (p. 59).

It would be helpful for the University to raise the awareness of visible minority employees of the services available through many governmental and non-governmental organizations. For example, it would be helpful for the advisory service to maintain a list of the immigrant serving agencies in Alberta. Such a list can be obtained through the Alberta Association of Immigrant Serving Agencies (AAISA). Since lack of information regarding accreditation of foreign credentials was a problem for some participants, the advisory service could also maintain information on the International Qualifications Assessment Service (IQAS). The above services could assist recent immigrants in fulfilling their career goals and becoming productive members of society.

Issue-Specific Recommendations

Several recommendations were made which apply to specific issues rather than to climate of the University of Alberta in general. Recommendations involve topics such as treatment by supervisors, English language ability and accent, and accommodation of religious and cultural traditions. Other issue-specific recommendations involve employment procedures related to recruitment and selection, job training and career development opportunities, promotion and advancement and the need for more visible minorities in supervisory and managerial positions.

Treatment by Supervisors

Some questionnaire respondents and interviewees expressed dissatisfaction with the treatment received from their supervisors. Recommendations regarding possible ways to improve the situation were proposed. These suggestions alluded to the diversity training which was discussed earlier in this chapter. Some participants suggested that supervisors should undergo a screening process which would encourage them to explore their opinions about visible minorities and different cultures. One interviewee made the following recommendations:

> *The University should make courses mandatory. What I recommend is, if you become a manager, there should be extensive training required. There should be a test to become a manager. Not everyone is management material. They may be a technical person who can do technical things but that doesn't mean they can manage people....There should be a personality test that takes into account how a manger reacts to visible minorities.* (Interview #4)

Although the feasibility or desirability of 'testing' or 'screening' for bias or prejudice is questionable, it would be beneficial to provide diversity training for supervisors and managers. Courses regarding supervising a diverse workforce were also recommended:

> *I would recommend some type of diversity training but I would want it to be more of a practical nature. For example, focusing in from the point of view of supervising visible minorities, awareness of practical things, not abstract issues that have no meaning, but bring it down to daily living.* (Interview #1)

In addition, it was recommended by an interviewee that individuals who are currently in supervisory positions be evaluated by those they supervise. *"Maybe we should be involved in appraising supervisors and managers too"* (Interview #2). This would enable employees to give constructive criticism which could be utilized by supervisors to improve their supervisory skills. These evaluations could be reviewed by the supervisor's supervisor. If numerous criticisms regarding the same subject were received, this could be addressed as part of the supervisor's performance appraisal. The same interviewee elaborated as follows: *"They should be getting regular feedback from the employees and if a manager is in charge of so many employees, he should be getting straight feedback from the employees not just from other managers"* (Interview #2). To a certain extent, evaluations of this kind already exist at the University in the form of student evaluations of instructors or professors. In my opinion, the University would be creating a climate of respect and equality by valuing the opinions of everyone.

Courses in general supervisory skills for supervisors and managers were also recommended. An interviewee stated: *"I would suggest courses for managers. These courses should stress the importance of honesty, frankness, keeping one's word and giving feedback to the employee on how they are doing"* (Interview #7).

English Language Ability and Accent

Several questionnaire respondents recommended that English as a second language (ESL) training should be available to employees at the University. One questionnaire respondent indicated that she felt that language barriers were hampering her ability to progress in her career. *"I do feel our ability has been masked by our language barriers."* Another questionnaire respondent advocated *"actively providing and promoting ESL courses to staff for whom English is not the primary language."*

The University of Alberta's *Guide to Training and Development Services and Policies* does indicate that French and English courses will be paid for through the employee's HRDF entitlement (1992, p. 6). It also indicates that English upgrading and literacy courses would be paid for through the employee's HRDF entitlement. It appears that the above respondents are not aware of these avenues for accessing ESL training. This would suggest a need for improved communication in this area.

Accommodation of Religious and Cultural Traditions

According to Fleras (1992), "fewer topics are likely to elicit as much emotion and hostility than the debate over the desirability of multi-religious expressions..." (p. 209). Fleras further indicates that while Roman Catholic and Protestant faiths account for the majority of religious affiliations in Canada, "other religions such as Hinduism, Islam, Buddhism, Confucianism, Sikhism and others too numerous to mention are now a part of our mosaic" (p. 211).

As demonstrated in Chapter IV, many participants support and encourage the development of a policy regarding accommodation of religious and cultural traditions. Objective 6.9 in *Opening Doors* calls for an official policy regarding the accommodation of non-majority religious holidays.

> The Vice-President (Academic) and (Finance and Administration) should prepare and submit to GFC and the Board of Governors for approval, a policy respecting faculty and staff requests to observe non-majority religious holidays. (p. 72)

According to Cathy Anne Pachnowski, Employment Equity Advisor for the Office of Human Rights, such a policy is currently being drafted. During the past few years, the Office of Human Rights has also undertaken several initiatives related to accommodation of religious and cultural traditions. They have sold the Multifaith Calendars which indicate the major religious festivals for majority and non-majority faiths. In addition, in 1996, they distributed to all Deans, Directors and Chairs, a list of the major religious festivals for the following faiths: Aboriginal Peoples, the Baha'i faith, Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, Jainism, Judaism, Shinto, Sikhism, Unitarianism, and Zoroastrianism.

As discussed in Chapter IV, under Accommodation of Religious and Cultural Traditions, many visible minority employees have felt obliged to adopt the religion and culture of the majority group after becoming 'Canadians'. This issue was highlighted again by an interviewee who described how an employee, who was a recent immigrant, felt obliged to change her name to better 'fit' into mainstream society. The interviewee tells of how she encouraged the employee to maintain her name as an integral part of her ethnocultural identity.

> *People would come in and they would have ethnic names and they would say things like please call me Mary or Susan and I would ask why? They would say that it is very difficult for Canadians to pronounce their name. I would say sorry, they will learn your name....You are not going to change your name to suit somebody else. This is your name and this is what we will call you. That's one of the things that I find people tend to do. They will change their names and I just think it is awful. Western people have lost the meaning of their names but names do mean something. In other parts of the world it does mean something and I think it's dreadful for people to expect you to change your name.* (Interview #1)

It is certainly preferable if employees do not feel obligated to alter themselves in order to 'fit in'. If someone chooses to relinquish aspects of their heritage, this is perfectly acceptable; however, the University should strive to provide an employment environment in which diversity is appreciated and encouraged.

Recruitment and Selection

One interviewee recommended the development of a mechanism to monitor and evaluate the recruitment and selection process at the University. A questionnaire respondent also perceived that it would be beneficial to monitor hiring practices.

> *If visible minorities with more qualifications are not hired for an advertised position, the Human Rights office should investigate - Who is hired? What*

> *are their qualifications and other personal records? That would give the hiring department some accountability.*

A related initiative is already being undertaken by the University. The 1995/96 *Annual Report to GFC* regarding *Opening Doors* states that a form is currently being developed

> through which to collect data regarding recruitment and selection activities. The information provided on the Recruitment Process Report Form will enable the appropriate Vice-President to assess whether or not appointments are being made in accordance with appropriate University policies and guidelines including those related to employment equity.... (p. 4)

As mentioned in Chapter V, some participants have expressed dissatisfaction with regard to the decentralized nature of recruitment. These comments suggested that they felt decentralization may disfavor certain members of visible minorities. One recommendation from a questionnaire respondent addresses this situation.

> *Recruitment and selection should be handled by Personnel rather than by the department head. This will not only eliminate nepotism, but provide an opportunity for all employees to apply for any position [for which] they feel they are suitable.*

According to Cynthia Caskey in the Human Resource Group (HRG), it is not the role of the HRG to make recruitment decisions. Only certain aspects of the recruitment process are coordinated through the HRG such as the initial competition. The HRG currently offers services such as reviewing applications, preparing a short list of candidates, preparing interview questions, attending the actual interview and doing reference checks. Departments are not obliged to utilize these services and can complete most of the recruitment process without any assistance from the HRG. Ms. Caskey indicated that approximately 60% of departments currently utilize the services offered by the HRG.

As noted in the 1996 *Federal Contractors Program Second Compliance Review*, the University is planning to move towards an even more decentralized recruitment system. The "HRG is developing a training program to help departments handle their own recruitment and selection" (p. 52). According to Ms. Caskey, further decentralization would encourage departments to handle many aspects of the recruiting process with which the HRG currently assists. In such a situation, mechanisms to ensure the accountability of departments for their hiring practices would need to be implemented.

Another topic related to recruitment is outreach initiatives. An interviewee spoke of the need to encourage members of visible minorities to utilize the recruitment system that currently exists at the University. Outreach initiatives to various ethnic and cultural organizations were also recommended to encourage visible minorities to apply.

> *I think effort has to be made to encourage visible minorities to keep in touch with the recruiting system we have. Now we have an automatic system where we can call in and we need to get ethnic community groups to know that it exists - not just advertise positions in the newspaper. To find out who the visible minority groups are is not hard because every year you have fifty ethnic groups at Heritage Days. The Heritage Festival Association has these numbers. The multicultural societies have them. They are there if you want to get in touch with them. (Interview #5)*

The University of Alberta has, in fact, undertaken several outreach initiatives. The jobs which have been available to external applicants have been "posted through EQUI-LINK, which is a job information employment service for community agencies associated with the designated groups" (University of Alberta, 1996, p.4). The Mennonite Centre for Newcomers is an example of an organization of specific interest to visible minorities which is a part of EQUI-LINK. As such, the Mennonite Centre for Newcomers regularly receives the University of Alberta's Employment Opportunities Bulletin. The University's affiliation with EQUI-LINK should, however, not rule out expanding outreach initiatives to include other organizations which serve immigrants such as the Edmonton Immigrant Services Association or other immigrant serving agencies. A discussion of other outreach initiatives undertaken by the University can be found in Chapter VII.

Training and Development

Participants suggested tracking and monitoring employees with respect to training and development. A questionnaire respondent suggested that the University should: *"Monitor employees to see how they are progressing with respect to training and development opportunities for visible minorities."* A related recommendation was also included in *Opening Doors*. According to the 1996, *Federal Contractors Program Second Compliance Review*, monitoring the use made of training and development opportunities has not yet begun.

Another recommendation was to actively encourage visible minorities to utilize their training and career development opportunities. *"Visible minorities should be encouraged for training and career development opportunities." Opening Doors* addresses this by suggesting that the Human Resource Group

> expand and publicize the service which it currently provides in career planning for non-academic staff; new elements should include completion of the job progression ladder (showing which positions have prerequisites), a library of non-academic position descriptions to be consulted on request, a workshop on career planning at the University, and a training program for supervisors on career coaching. (p. 70)

It would be very effective to have a career planning program whereby an advisor would be available to provide advice on training and career development opportunities. This type of career planning would be valuable for all employees at the University not just visible minority employees. However, according to Cynthia Caskey, of the Human Resource Group (HRG), this program has not been fully implemented due to limited resources.

Ensuring that employees are aware of training and development opportunities was also seen as important. According to Ms. Caskey, all new part- and full-time continuing support employees receive a copy of the *Agreement Between the Board of Governors of the University of Alberta and the Non-Academic Staff Association* which includes information on training and development opportunities. Ms. Caskey also noted that the HRG has just redrafted the information regarding training and development services and policies and this information will be distributed to each eligible employee during the summer of 1997.

Promotion and Advancement

The tracking and monitoring of visible minority employees to ascertain the degree to which they are being promoted was strongly recommended by one interviewee.

> *If they really want to promote visible minorities, tracking is the only way they can do it. The personnel office has all the data and all the information regarding an employee. If the employee is not moving, not progressing, I would say for any employee, - but especially for visible minorities - it is very important to pay attention....If you have hired visible minorities and if they are not progressing, whose fault is it? As an organization, you are not doing a good job....The University should do some follow-up. They should pick randomly and see where the visible minorities are today and where they are five years down the road. In the process, what have the visible minorities done to advance in their career and what has the department done to acknowledge or reward that effort? (Interview #4)*

Keeping track of data on visible minority personnel is an important recommendation. Jain (1988), in his report entitled *Employment Discrimination Against Visible Minorities and Employment Equity,* made the recommendation to

> keep and make public both the stock and flow data by minority and non-minority status. Flow data provides information on the movement of minorities into and through the organization, including numbers of applicants, hires, promotions, terminations and so forth. Stock data provides a 'snap-shot' of the current workforce make-up by minority and non-minority status across all occupational levels within an organization. These data will help to identify entry and post-entry job barriers. (p. 33)

Tracking applications for promotion is also recommended in *Opening Doors*. According the 1996 *Federal Contractors Program Second Compliance Review*, monitoring applications for promotion has not yet been implemented.

One recommendation made by an interviewee involved giving promotions based on experience and not primarily on education or credentials.

> *They should go according to merit. Now I'm not saying that they shouldn't consider education and training, but they should also look at the experience the person has. They should always give people a chance to get ahead. (Interview #6)*

This recommendation is significant as some groups have historically had unequal access to education. Others have not been able to have their credentials accredited in Canada. By taking experience into account, certain groups who historically have had less educational opportunities or who have not had their credentials accredited, would have a greater chance of obtaining a promotion. Programs to provide education and training to historically disadvantaged groups also need to be implemented. According to the 1996 *Federal Contractors Program Second Compliance Review*, the University is currently conducting a needs analysis to determine if "the educational benefits and opportunities for training and development available to non-academic staff...are adequate to enable members of designated groups to develop skills and qualifications needed for promotion...(p. 54).

One questionnaire respondent suggested that visible minorities are disfavored when it comes to promotion because promotions are often given based on connections with people in management.

> *The University has to give an equal opportunity and chance for promotion to visible minority employees who are already qualified. [Name of department] employee promotion and transfer is strongly related to so-called 'connections' between management and workers.*

If some promotions are facilitated through connections with management, this may have a disproportionately negative affect on visible minorities. Since the proportion of visible minorities in managerial positions is not high, they may not have the informal network or 'connections' allegedly necessary to facilitate obtaining a promotion.

In order to avoid situations whereby promotions are given based primarily on connections, the University currently recommends that at least two individuals sit on selection committees and that at least one of them has taken the training program regarding human rights legislation, employment equity and techniques of interviewing which is entitled *Employment Equity and Human Rights Considerations in Non-Academic Staff Selection*. This is a measure is designed to encourage equitable promotion practices.

More Visible Minorities in Supervisory and Management Positions

Many questionnaire respondents and interviewees recommended that more visible minorities be recruited and promoted into supervisory and managerial positions. Participants felt that as more visible minorities move into these positions, they will be able to effectively advocate for the interests of visible minority employees and also serve as role models. According to one questionnaire respondent: *"Once a few visible minorities are promoted to supervisory positions, things may change."*

One interviewee perceived that visible minorities were underrepresented in managerial positions.

> *I don't know if there is a visible minority in an APO position on campus - why not? Where are the visible minorities in the faculties? Where are the visible minorities in the management of all of these support staff departments? They are non-existent. What level are the minorities at? Why aren't there any? You have department heads and associate heads and you have managers. Where are the visible minorities? What are we going to do to improve that?* (Interview #5)

In order to put this interviewee's comments into perspective, it is necessary to clarify the actual number of self-identified visible minorities in managerial positions as of December 31, 1995 (the date as of which the data for this study was obtained). In order to do so, it is necessary to provide some background. At the University of Alberta, 'managerial' positions are considered academic positions. There are three standard occupational categories for academic staff on campus. Code 01 - Upper Level Managers - includes but is not limited to the President and Vice-Presidents. According to Employment Equity Census Data on December 31, 1995, there were no visible minorities in this category. Code 02 - Middle and Other Managers - includes but is not limited to Associate Vice-Presidents, Deans, Department Chairs, Directors, Administrative and Professional Officers (APOs) and some librarians. As of December 31, 95, there were 21 self-identified visible minorities in this category. Code 03 can be divided into University Teachers and Other Professionals. University Teachers includes but is not limited to Full, Associate, and Assistant Professors not included in 1 and 2 above. Other Professionals includes but is not limited to Counsellors, some Librarians and FSOs. There were 135 self-designated visible minorities in Occupation Code 3 as of December 31, 1995. Thus, while it is not accurate to say that managers who are also members of visible minorities are 'non existent,' they are underrepresented. According to the 1996 *Federal Contractors Program Second Compliance Review*, visible minorities continue to be underrepresented in managerial positions (p. 29).

Another questionnaire respondent suggested that the number of visible minority employees in supervisory positions should be monitored. *"Every year, print a comparison chart showing the proportion of visible minority employees and the proportion of supervisory positions they hold."* This would be beneficial in monitoring the University's targets for change. Another questionnaire respondent recommended *"putting more visible minorities in high profile positions (all qualifications being equal of course)."*

Interviewees also suggested monitoring the number of visible minorities in supervisory positions.

> *The Office of Human Rights and the University personnel office have to make sure that they are hiring all kinds of people. They have to see that some of the supervisors are visible minorities. Maybe that will eventually solve some of the problems and then they will see that visible minorities can handle high ranking responsible positions. (Interview #4)*

The Office of Human Rights already monitors this through the Employment Equity Census. Each year they provide to the University community a detailed report of the number and type of positions held by those who identify themselves as members of the designated groups.

An interviewee stressed that many visible minorities have excellent managerial skills and they just need to be given the chance to utilize them.

> *They [the current management] need to recognize that many visible minorities would make good managers too. If we can leave our homeland and come here where there is severe weather and where we have no family and we not only survive but prosper, then we obviously have good*

> *management skills. If we didn't have these skills, then we would not be able to manage our lives and survive. (Interview #4)*

The Change Process

Employment equity involves change. However, the way in which change is approached can be integral to the success or failure of the process. A successful change process involves setting targets for the implementation of initiatives. Accountability to ensure that plans and policies are being implemented is also vital. In addition, employees need to feel included in the change process in order to build support and commitment. Including the voices of all employees would have a positive impact on the change process, therefore, enlarging the scope of the current study to include all employees at the University is also recommended.

Setting Targets/Implementation

One questionnaire respondent indicated that it is necessary to start setting targets with the intention of actually meeting those targets. *"Saying one is an equal opportunity employer is not enough. There should be targets set for all departments to have visible minorities on their staff over a reasonable period of time as the opportunity arises."* An interviewee also expressed the same viewpoint. *"They are going to have to do something about setting targets and holding people responsible for whether they meet those targets or not"* (Interview #5). It is important to note that each objective outlined in *Opening Doors* was assigned a target date for completion. A discussion of these targets can be found in Chapter VII.

Several questionnaire respondents felt that the employment equity plan as it is outlined on paper is very impressive. However, they felt that the current plan is not being fully implemented. Examples of such comments include *"Changes are not needed if the current program is enforced."* and *"There are many rules already in place."*

Another form of 'target' is the setting of quantitative targets for the representation of designated groups within a workplace. In the United States, there has been a significant backlash from those who do not support the use of quotas. Perhaps this backlash has effected the way in which Canadians conceive of the concept. In Canada, we have also set certain quantitative targets. For example, the Federal Contractors Program and the Employment Equity Act strive to ensure that the numbers of designated groups within a specific workforce are represented in proportions similar to their representation in the appropriate local, provincial or national labor force. As stated in the

University of Alberta's *1996 Federal Contractors Program Second Compliance Review*, "wherever the University's workforce is underrepresented..., the target is to reach the percentage in the QLAP [qualified local available pool] or QPAP [qualified provincial available pool]" (p. 32).However, many individuals are opposed to quantitative targets because they feel that they will result in the lowering of employment standards. However, it is important to note that these quantitative targets are not arbitrarily enforced without regard for the experience, skill or education of designated group members.

Rather than opposing these targets, it would be helpful to view them as a positive step towards creating diversity. It would beneficial to strengthen mechanisms through which employers are monitored as to their progress in systematically achieving diversity. Recently the federal government has acknowledged this need and has strengthened the Employment Equity Act. The Canadian Human Rights Commission now has the authority to audit both public and private sector employers to ensure they are meeting both their qualitative and quantitative goals.

Accountability

Many questionnaire respondents and interviewees stated that accountability is a key issue when striving to enhance employment equity initiatives. One questionnaire respondent expressed frustration at what was perceived as a lack of accountability of those who are in positions of power. *"I don't think anything can help. We can set up rules and guidelines but management has the ability to 'create' any excuse for their decisions."* An interviewee also articulated this view.

> *Accountability is crucial because if department heads have to be accountable for what they do, they couldn't get away with it. You can set targets but unless you're hiring, it doesn't mean anything. You have to look back and say how many people have you hired over the last five years and how have you changed your hiring patterns. Have you hired any women? Have you hired any visible minorities? Have you hired anyone with a physical disability? There has to be some way of accounting for what these people do.* (Interview #5)

The same interviewee elaborated on other areas where, in his estimation, accountability is needed.

> *Especially with academics - there is a big turnaround. There is a big turnover. They have to replace faculty members. Where are the visible minorities in that turnover? Where are the women in these faculties? Why aren't they there? There are a lot of qualified women and there are a lot of*

> *qualified visible minorities. I think they are going to have to start giving answers about these things.* (Interview #5)

The University currently has several mechanisms to ensure accountability for employment equity measures. One involves the responsibility of the appropriate Vice-Presidents in conjunction with the Office of Human Rights to report annually to the University community regarding the progress made in implementing the recommendations in *Opening Doors*. Since the approval of *Opening Doors* in 1994, there have been two such reports - one for 1994/95 and another for 1995/96. Another mechanism of accountability involves the compliance reviews that the University is required to undergo in order to continue to receive funding from the federal government. Thus far, there have been two such reviews.

In the future, the University may also look at developing unit level employment equity plans in order to increase the accountability of the individual units on campus. Perhaps such an endeavor would provide the increased accountability referred to by the above participants. In addition, if the performance appraisal process for supervisors and managers was linked to achieving some of the employment equity-related goals, this may also provide enhanced accountability.

Inclusion of All Employees

In order for all employees of the University of Alberta to support employment equity initiatives, each and every employee needs to be included in the process. One aspect of this inclusion involves ensuring that *all* employees receive information regarding important issues such as training and career development programs and issue-specific workshops.

This may involve finding creative ways of ensuring that the information which is sent out to each department is actually posted or circulated so that all employees are aware of policies, programs, issues, workshops and so forth. One questionnaire respondent recommended mailing information to employees directly rather than asking departments to distribute it. *"Information about workshops, presentations, and material available through the Office of Human Rights should be circulated to employees directly and not only to Deans etc., expecting them to 'pass it around.'"*

Another aspect of inclusion involves ensuring that *all* information is written in *plain* language so that it can be understood by each and every employee. One questionnaire respondent suggested that the *"language used should be more of a layman's terms to ensure better understanding."* Elitist language that is full of jargon hampers thorough understanding of important information. It would be useful to do an audit of the information that is currently intended for employees and ascertain if it is written in plain language which can be understood by everyone.

Enlarge Scope of Employment Equity Study

Related to the idea of inclusivity, another recommendation involved enlarging the scope of the employment equity study to include all employees. One interviewee made the following suggestion: *"I think your questionnaire is great but it shouldn't be targeted to visible minorities only. This survey should be conducted, maybe not annually but more frequently, and it should be given throughout the University"* (Interview #9). These comments were also echoed by a questionnaire respondent. Enlarging the scope of the study to include all academic and support employees at the University would provide an excellent source of comparison for evaluation of the issues. Precisely such as study is currently being undertaken by the Office of Human Rights. It is a 'work climate study' and will include *all* part- and full-time continuing academic and support staff.

Despite calls for expansion of employment equity efforts, there was one questionnaire respondent who felt that this was not necessary and would not be the best use of scarce funding. *"I think the U of A already has the best employment equity plan and there is no need to create more equity plan than the University can afford."* This respondent appeared to be worried about the cost of employment equity in times of economic restraint. This view is perhaps encouraged by certain mainstream ideologies which hold that employment equity and other related programs such as heritage language programs are a non-essential luxury or 'frill.' When addressing similar complaints, Judge Rosalie Silberman Abella's eloquent response makes an important point. "Until we have some mechanism to measure the cost of injustice, we have no business complaining about the cost of justice."

Conclusion

This chapter has introduced the recommendations of questionnaire respondents and interviewees regarding changes needed to create a more equitable employment environment for visible minorities at the University of Alberta. The first section outlined the educational programs which were suggested such as diversity training, assertiveness training, and conflict management training. An educational program about harassment, discrimination and racism was also suggested along with employment equity education and an educational program for recent immigrants. The second area involved issue-specific recommendations for such issues as treatment by supervisors, English language ability and accent, accommodation and maintenance of religious and cultural traditions, recruitment and selection, training and development, promotion and advancement and the need for more visible minorities in supervisory or managerial positions. The third section introduced the recommendations regarding the change process itself such as the need to set targets, to be accountable and to include all employees in the change process. Enlarging the scope of the employment equity study was also suggested.

Chapter VII

Conclusions and Recommendations

This chapter provides a summary of the key findings from this study which have already been elaborated upon in chapters IV and V. In addition, the recommendations from the questionnaire respondents and the interviewees, which have been discussed in detail in chapter VI, are summarized and analyzed. Where applicable, I have provided my own recommendations. This chapter also includes theoretical reflections regarding the study, which are followed by a discussion of methodological issues and suggestions for further research.

SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS

Racist Behavior and Situations

58.5% of questionnaire respondents experienced behavior or situations which they would consider to be racist towards visible minorities while 40.4% did not. (No Response = 1.1%)

Questionnaire respondents and interviewees who had experienced such behavior and situations, contended that the incidents took the form of name-calling, insulting or stereotypical comments, graffiti, verbal jokes, and practical jokes. The participants noted that the above mentioned behavior or situations pertained to their place of origin, English language capability, accent, diction, vocal projection (loudness), overall communication skills, food, appearance (skin color and dress), behavior, mentality and sexuality.

Stereotyping Related to Ethnic or Cultural Heritage

51.7% of questionnaire respondents experienced stereotyping related to their ethnic or cultural heritage while 44.9% did not. (No Response = 3.4%)

Questionnaire respondents and interviewees who had experienced stereotyping, claimed that it involved assumptions that all members of a certain ethnic or cultural group are: rude, lazy, smarter, more hard-working, immoral, the same, poor, uneducated, aggressive, arrogant, or have poor communication skills. Other stereotypes reportedly involved assumptions that visible minorities are not 'true Canadians,' should not pursue certain careers and should not earn more money than those who are not members of visible minority groups.

Having to Work Harder than Co-Workers Who are not Visible Minorities

60.7% of questionnaire respondents felt they have to work harder than co-workers who are not visible minority employees while 37.1% did not feel this way. (No Response = 2.2%)

Although the narrative comments from a few participants stated that all employees work equally hard, the majority of the questionnaire respondents and interviewees held an alternate view. Many visible minorities employees perceived that they have to work harder, have more education and credentials and be more accurate and precise with regard to the quality of their work than those who are not visible minority employees. Many felt that they had to prove that they are not only equal to but better than co-workers who are not visible minorities in order to counteract certain negative stereotypes. Some also perceived that their hard work and effort was not being recognized and was, in some cases, being perceived as evidence of a deficiency.

Recognition of Education Received Outside of Canada

79.8% of questionnaire respondents received a portion of their education outside of Canada. 19.1% of questionnaire respondents received all of their education within Canada. (No Response = 5.7%)

Of those who received education outside of Canada, 44.9% felt that this education had been fairly recognized. However, 30.3% felt that their education had not been fairly recognized. This question was not applicable for 19.1% of the respondents, perhaps because they had received most or all of their education within Canada.

Narrative comments from several questionnaire respondents and interviewees indicated that their education had been fairly recognized within Canada. It was noted that specific types of technical education from other countries and certain levels of education received within the British school system are well-recognized in Canada.

Conversely, a large proportion of questionnaire respondents and interviewees perceived that their education had not been fairly recognized. However, this perception appeared to apply to Canada as a whole, rather than to the University of the Alberta specifically. Some questioned whether or not it is fair to require visible minorities to upgrade credentials which were received outside of Canada. Some visible minority employees, who have not had the opportunity to upgrade their credentials due to a lack of time and/or money, indicated that they have had to accept employment which is not within their field.

Some suggested that 'foreign' work experience may be perceived as having less value and, as a consequence, some visible minorities are allegedly unable to obtain certain types of employment in Canada until they have 'Canadian' work experience. It was suggested that the University of Alberta and Canada as a whole would benefit if the training, expertise and experience that immigrants have obtained in their country of origin was viewed as having more value than is presently attributed to it.

Accommodation of Religious and Cultural Traditions

31.5% of questionnaire respondents felt that it is important for the University to make special arrangements in order to allow employees to celebrate/practice specific religious/cultural traditions. 65.2% of questionnaire respondents felt that it is not important. (No Response = 3.3%)

Many questionnaire respondents and interviewees provided comments that supported accommodation of religious/cultural traditions even though they did not personally require such accommodations. Some felt that there are many benefits to be gained, from the perspective of personal enrichment and educational value, by educating staff about the religious/cultural practices of non-majority groups.

Others did not support the idea and suggested that visible minorities should use their vacation entitlement in order to celebrate/practice religious or cultural traditions. There were also participants who felt that religion is a private matter that should not be discussed at work. The fairness of accommodating religious/cultural traditions was questioned by those who felt that this represents 'special treatment' for minority groups.

There appeared to be considerable confusion regarding the logistics of how religious and cultural accommodation would be administered. Some questioned whether it would be feasible or even desirable. Concern was expressed with regard to the costs of administering such a program. There were also concerns regarding whether visible minorities who took 'non-majority' holidays would be obliged to work during 'majority' holidays such as at Christmas. This would be problematic since University buildings are closed at this time. Some suggested that there are too many different religious and cultural traditions and this would make administering such a program difficult.

Requests for Religious and Cultural Accommodation

13.5% of questionnaire respondents (or 12 people) had requested special arrangements in order to allow them to celebrate/practice specific religious/cultural traditions. 84.3% of questionnaire respondents had not requested special arrangements. (No Response = 2.2%)

Because so few individuals indicated that they had requested special arrangements, representing the level of satisfaction with how the request was handled in terms of a percentage is not very informative.

For those who did not request special arrangements, the reason provided by some was that they were not required. There were also those who did not support such special arrangements and felt that vacation time should be utilized or that religion should be 'kept out of the workplace.' Some indicated that they did not want 'special favors' because they were different.

However, certain individuals indicated that they were apprehensive about asking for time off because they did not want to be perceived as troublemakers or because they feared that their request would be denied.

In the absence of a formal policy regarding this issue, some individuals who require special arrangements have been using their vacation time, making-up the time by working additional hours, or rescheduling their religious or cultural events so that they do not take place during work hours.

Orientation

61.8% of questionnaire respondents indicated that they attended an orientation when they began their employment; 34.8% indicated that they did not attend an orientation. (No Response = 3.4%)

When responding to the question, "please indicate how satisfied you were with the orientation process," responses from questionnaire respondents who attended an orientation were: Very Dissatisfied (1.1%), Dissatisfied (6.7%), Undecided (23.6%), Satisfied (14.6%), and Very Satisfied (13.5%). (No Response = 5.7%; Not Applicable = 34.8%)

As noted in previous chapters, the University of Alberta does not currently offer a centrally administered orientation to all new employees. Providing an orientation to new employees is currently the responsibility of the departments. Many questionnaire respondents and interviewees indicated that they felt orientations are an important source of information regarding such topics as job training and career development opportunities and employment equity issues - especially for new employees. It was also suggested that orientations help make employees feel welcome and respected.

English Language Ability and Accent

The majority of the questionnaire respondents rated themselves as having good to excellent English language ability. When commenting on the statement, "I feel that I have experienced discrimination related to my level of English language ability," responses from questionnaire respondents were: Strongly Disagree (40.4%), Disagree (15.7%), Undecided (24.7%), Agree (9.0%), and Strongly Agree (6.7%). (No Response = 3.5%)

When commenting on the statement "I feel that I have experienced discrimination related to my accent," responses from questionnaire respondents were: Strongly Disagree (41.6%), Disagree (12.4%), Undecided (14.6.%), Agree (15.7%), and Strongly Agree (12.4%). (No Response = 3.3%)

Themes from the narrative comments of questionnaire respondents and interviewees with regard to English language ability and accent are listed below.

Some participants perceived that:

- some co-workers and supervisors have a tendency to paraphrase what visible minorities say
- certain visible minority employees who have an accent or a less extensive English language vocabulary may be viewed as having poor communication skills or as being less intelligent
- employees with a British accent may be perceived to be more intelligent
- what is incorrectly perceived of as 'poor communication skills' is being formally documented in performance appraisals
- some employees mock or belittle visible minorities who do not have a complete understanding of English slang or idioms
- some individuals are able to understand visible minorities who have an accent, while other individuals are not. (It was suggested that the attitude of the listener plays an important role.)
- visible minorities who speak more loudly or rapidly may be perceived as rude or 'ill-mannered'

The University's Employment Equity Plan - *Opening Doors*

44.9% of questionnaire respondents were aware of the University's Employment Equity plan while 53.9% were not. (No Response = 1.2 %)

Of those who were aware of the plan and who chose to answer the question, the level of satisfaction with the plan was as follows: Very Dissatisfied (7.9%), Dissatisfied (10.1%), Undecided (15.7%), Satisfied (6.7%), and Very Satisfied (6.7%). (No Response = 2.3%) The question was not applicable for 50.6% of questionnaire respondents, likely because they were not aware of the plan. Comments obtained from questionnaire respondents and interviewees who had a knowledge of the employment equity plan are listed below.

Some participants perceived that:

- the University of Alberta deserves congratulations on the progress they have made with regard to employment equity thus far
- some of the suggestions for action in the employment equity plan have not been translated into action and thus remain 'honorable platitudes'
- it is difficult to ensure compliance to employment equity goals without 'positive or negative repercussions'
- doing research is not enough to bring about the implementation of employment equity goals
- the pace of implementation of employment equity is slow
- there are very few or no visible minorities in specific positions
- 'tokenism' is creating the illusion that equitable change is occurring when this may not be the case
- there is a need for senior level management to be committed to employment equity principles and actions
- there is a need for more education regarding employment equity at the University of Alberta

Treatment by Supervisors

When commenting on the statement "I feel I have experienced discrimination related to my ethnic or cultural background with respect to treatment by my supervisor(s)," responses from questionnaire respondents were: Strongly Disagree (44.9%), Disagree (15.7%), Undecided (15.7%), Agree (6.7%) and Strongly Agree (14.6%). (No Response = 2.4%) Themes from the narrative comments of questionnaire respondents and interviewees are provided below.

Some participants perceived that:

- there are certain exemplary supervisors who have not only acted in a fair and unbiased fashion but have served as mentors and coaches and have provided many opportunities for visible minority employees to grow in their careers
- even when their relationship with their supervisor is good, some visible minority employees still did not advance in their careers

- some visible minority employees experience demeaning behavior, verbal abuse, negative or condescending remarks, and intimidation
- visible minorities are sometimes assigned undesirable tasks by their supervisor
- visible minority employees are not addressed or consulted with, to the same degree as co-workers who are not visible minorities

Performance Review

When commenting on the statement "I feel that I have experienced discrimination related to my ethnic or cultural background with respect to the performance review/evaluation process," responses from questionnaire respondents were: Strongly Disagree (44.9%), Disagree (20.2%), Undecided (12.4%), Agree (5.6%), and Strongly Agree (12.4%). (No Response = 4.5%) Themes from the narrative comments of questionnaire respondents and interviewees are provided below.

Some participants perceived that:

- they were given a lower rating than they deserved on their performance appraisal
- they were being evaluated on a personal level, rather than on a professional level
- when they were evaluated by other members of visible minority groups, they were rated higher than when they were evaluated by those who were not members of a visible minority group
- they were assessed unfairly on their performance appraisal after raising concerns regarding a supervisor's inappropriate behavior

Treatment by Co-Workers

When commenting on the statement "I feel that I have experienced discrimination related to my ethnic or cultural background with respect to treatment by co-workers," responses from questionnaire respondents were: Strongly Disagree (34.8%), Disagree (19.1%), Undecided (16.9%), Agree (15.7%) and Strongly Agree (9.0%). (No Response = 4.5%) Themes from the narrative comments of questionnaire respondents and interviewees are provided below.

Some participants perceived that:

- they have experienced positive relationships with their co-workers
- they have been unfairly allocated undesirable tasks by co-workers

- they experience stereotyping, jokes, name-calling, or negative comments pertaining to their ethnocultural background
- some individuals who are not visible minorities act as if they are superior to those who are visible minorities
- social relations can be problematic because employees who are not visible minorities have their own particular groups for coffee breaks etc.
- they have, at times, felt alienated
- they were not welcome in their new position
- some employees, who are not visible minorities, believe that visible minorities are taking 'their' jobs away

Employment Procedures

Recruitment and Selection

When commenting on the statement "I feel that I have experienced discrimination related to my ethnic or cultural background with respect to recruitment and selection procedures at the University of Alberta," responses from questionnaire respondents were: Strongly Disagree (34.8%), Disagree (19.1%), Undecided (19.1%), Agree (13.5%), and Strongly Agree (9.0%). (No Response = 4.5%) Themes from the narrative comments of questionnaire respondents and interviewees are expressed below.

Some participants perceived that:

- recruitment and selection procedures are generally fair and unbiased
- some managers and supervisors prefer to hire individuals who most resemble themselves
- there is a lack of visible minorities employed in certain areas
- visible minorities are merely being hired as 'tokens' to create the impression of equity
- they have been discouraged from applying for certain positions
- too much freedom is accorded to one individual to select candidates to fill vacancies
- non-centralized recruiting sometimes results in visible minorities being negatively affected
- certain vacancies are not advertised and recruiting is done internally
- certain positions are given out on the basis of personal or familial connections
- inappropriate questions related to family status and child care arrangements are being asked in some instances (note: these questions do not relate directly to ethnic or cultural background)

Training and Development Opportunities

When commenting on the statement "I feel that I have received adequate information regarding training and career development opportunities at the University of Alberta," responses from questionnaire respondents were: Strongly Disagree (9.0%), Disagree (13.5%), Undecided (16.9%), Agree (39.3%), and Strongly Agree (20.2%). (No Response = 1.1%)

When commenting on the statement "I feel that I have fully utilized my training and career development opportunities," responses from questionnaire respondents were: Strongly Disagree (12.4%), Disagree (15.7%), Undecided (19.1%), Agree (32.6%), and Strongly Agree (18.0%). (No Response = 2.2%)

When commenting on the statement "I feel that I have experienced discrimination related to my ethnic or cultural background with respect to access to training and career development opportunities at the University of Alberta," responses from questionnaire respondents were: Strongly Disagree (48.3%), Disagree (15.7%), Undecided (18.0%), Agree (5.6%), and Strongly Agree (7.9%). (No Response = 4.5%) Themes from the narrative comments of questionnaire respondents and interviewees are listed below.

Some participants perceived that:

- training is being encouraged by certain supervisors
- there is a lack of understanding regarding which courses will or will not be funded through the Human Resources Development Fund
- there is confusion regarding whether a supervisor has the power to approve or deny an employee's request to take courses when the courses are scheduled outside of work hours
- inequities result when some employees are given time off with pay to attend courses while others are not
- supervisors must recommend that employees take courses before employees can access the Human Resources Development Fund
- their supervisor had not permitted them to take training because it was not related to their current position
- there may be a misperception, on the part of certain supervisors, that all training has to relate to the position in which the employee is currently employed
- there is a general lack of awareness regarding the existence of the Remission of Tuition program
- there is a lack of awareness of the Human Resources Development Fund and Remission and Tuition programs which stems from a breakdown in the way that information is disseminated

- they have been discouraged from taking courses
- the current fiscal climate and intensified workload is making some visible minority employees hesitant to request time off for training and career development

Promotion and Advancement

When commenting on the statement "I feel that I have experienced discrimination related to my ethnic or cultural background with respect to promotion and advancement practices at the University of Alberta," responses from questionnaire respondents were: Strongly Disagree (27.0%), Disagree (18.0%), Undecided (12.4%), Agree (14.6%), and Strongly Agree (23.6%). (No Response = 4.4%) Themes from the narrative comments of questionnaire respondents and interviewees are listed below.

Some participants perceived that:

- they have received fair treatment with regard to promotion and advancement
- the general preference is to promote employees who are not members of visible minority groups
- some female visible minority employees may experience discrimination not only on the basis of ethnic or cultural group membership, but on the basis of gender as well
- those who speak English as a second language are sometimes disfavored when it comes to promotion and advancement because they may be perceived as having poor communication skills
- in some instances, promotions are allocated on the basis of personal or familial relationships
- the morale of visible minority employees can be affected by the perception that they receive fewer promotions compared to those who are not visible minority employees
- there is a need to explain the term 'not suitable' - the rationale sometimes provided when promotions are *not* granted to certain members of visible minorities

Downsizing

When commenting on the statement "I feel that I have experienced discrimination related to my ethnic or cultural background with respect to downsizing practices at the University of Alberta," responses from questionnaire respondents were: Strongly Disagree (43.8%), Disagree (19.1%), Undecided (19.1%), Agree (3.4%) and Strongly Agree (7.9%). (No Response = 6.7%)

Themes from the narrative comments of questionnaire respondents and interviewees are listed below.

Some participants perceived that:

- downsizing decisions are made based on the needs of the department, and not based on the ethnocultural background of employees
- downsizing has negatively affected areas where there are a large proportion of visible minority employees
- tension results when an employee who is not a visible minority is laid-off and there are visible minorities who remain employed
- some employees who are not visible minorities feel that visible minorities should be laid-off first

Implications and Recommendations for the University of Alberta

This section provides a summary of the recommendations furnished by the questionnaire respondents and interviewees. I have also provided additional recommendations. The first set of recommendations relates to education and training, the second set to specific issues and the third set to the change process in general. Some of the recommendations have already been undertaken or are in the process of being addressed through initiatives outlined in *Opening Doors*. Commentary has been provided to highlight these cases. In some instances, participants were unaware that programs which could be of assistance to them are already in place. Thus, suggestions regarding improved mechanisms of communication are included.

Recommendations Related to Education or Training

Cross-Cultural/Diversity Training

It was recommended that cross-cultural/diversity training be provided for all employees, including visible minority employees, and that attendance should be mandatory. It was emphasized that this training should be provided not only for managers and supervisors, but for receptionists and other front-line staff. This training would be particularly important for those who are employed in human resources-related positions throughout the University. Such training would be beneficial not only for new employees as part of their orientation, but for *all* employees who are currently employed at the University. A similar recommendation has also been made in *Opening Doors*. Objective 3.5 states:

> PSSR [HRG] and the training staff in the office of the Vice-President (Academic), in consultation with the Office of Human Rights, should design and deliver an ongoing series of workshops on valuing diversity in the workplace. Some workshops should address the needs of supervisors and managers, while others should be directed at those who have no supervisory or managerial responsibilities. (p. 64)

Such training could explore attitudes and stereotypic thinking and examine both interpersonal and systemic discrimination. This training could allow for an opportunity to share cultural and religious traditions. It could also encourage valuing the strengths and special contributions that visible minorities bring to the workplace, such as knowledge of other languages and cultures, new and innovative ways of doing things and a different perspective.

Assertiveness Training

It was suggested that assertiveness training is important because it can help people to gain the necessary skills to speak out on their own behalf. It is my belief that this training would be valuable as long as it is not used by visible minorities as a mechanism for coping with or overcoming racism. As mentioned in chapter VI, assertiveness training would not be beneficial unless interpersonal and systemic discrimination are addressed as well.

Conflict Management Training

Training in how to manage and resolve conflict was recommended. It is important that people be aware of the avenues available for conflict resolution. Employees should know where to turn and how best to handle a situation of conflict, in order to avoid unnecessary escalation of situations of conflict.

Rather than dealing with conflict in a reactive fashion after it has occurred, it would be beneficial to approach conflict in a proactive fashion through educational programs. An example of a course which teaches people to deal with conflict is one regarding dealing with difficult people which is currently offered by the Office of Human Rights. By teaching all employees skills related to conflict resolution as well as communication skills, it is hoped that employees would be able to resolve situations of conflict before they escalate.

Education Regarding Avenues for Dealing with Complaints

Participants recommended improving the mechanisms through which complaints are addressed on campus. One participant suggested appointing an

Ombudsperson for staff complaints, another recommended a joint committee between union and management, still another recommended appointing an ethics commissioner. As the mechanisms for dealing with complaints on campus are extremely complex, it is beyond the scope of this study to evaluate them.

According to Janet Smith, Office of Human Rights, the resolution of complaints can take informal or formal routes. The Office of Human Rights uses *informal* procedures which involve such techniques as coaching and mediation. An example of a *formal* complaint mechanism would be the filing of a grievance. One participant expressed regret that he was not aware of the informal complaint process and had thus proceeded immediately to formal complaint procedures. It is therefore recommended that all employees be made aware of the formal and informal mechanisms for dealing with complaints.

Education Regarding Harassment, Discrimination, and Racism

As stated in the 1996 *Federal Contractors Program (FCP) Second Compliance Review*, "the work of the Office of Human Rights since its establishment in 1991, reveals, in some areas on campus, there still remains a lack of understanding about discrimination" (p. 60).

Education regarding harassment, discrimination and racism was recommended. It was felt that such training should define and explain harassment, discrimination and racism. For example, it is essential for employees to understand the difference between interpersonal racism and systemic discrimination. It is important to note that the Office of Human Rights currently offers seminars on these topics several times a year. It would be beneficial to take measures to encourage increased attendance at these sessions such as offering them within specific departments during the lunch hour or during staff meetings.

Education Regarding Employment Equity

It was suggested that the University should offer an educational program regarding employment equity. This program could outline the main tenets of employment equity and clarify misperceptions about what employment equity is trying to achieve. For example, it could stress that employment equity does not involve filling quotas with no consideration given to qualifications, experience or skill. It would also stress that employment equity does not involve 'reverse discrimination.' The Office of Human Rights does already offer workshops, seminars and discussion groups regarding employment equity related issues. In fact, according to the *Federal Contractors Program Second Compliance Review*, "in 1995, the Office sponsored 77 educational events which were attended by

1535 people" (p. 42). It would also be beneficial to take measures to encourage increased attendance at these sessions such as offering them within specific departments during the lunch hour or during staff meetings.

Educational Program or Advisory Services for Recent Immigrants

It was suggested that an educational program or advisory services could be provided which would assist recent immigrants so that they can more easily adapt to life in Canada. Providing recent immigrants with concrete skills and information which are pertinent to everyday living would facilitate the transition process and allow them to more quickly become productive members of the University community and of society as a whole.

This recommendation has already been made in Objective 6.7 of *Opening Doors*. It was suggested that the University "establish advisory services for the integration and accommodation of...recent immigrants" (p. 72). However, according the *FCP Second Compliance Review*, "no advisory services are available to help integrate and accommodate recent immigrant staff... (p. 59). It was noted that "some departments make available to recent immigrant employees some services and training opportunities of interest to them, including courses in English as a second language" (p. 59). Although the efforts of these individual departments deserve praise, it would be beneficial for the University as a whole to develop and administer such services. It would also be beneficial to be able to provide information about where such services can be obtained within the greater community, i.e., through the immigrant serving agencies.

ISSUE SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS

Treatment by Supervisors

It was recommended that all supervisors attend cross cultural or diversity training. Courses in general supervisory skills were also recommended. It was also suggested that supervisors should be evaluated by those they supervise. The constructive criticism or praise could be reviewed by the supervisor's supervisor and discussed as part of the performance appraisal process. Evaluations of supervisors could serve as a mechanism by which supervisors could receive praise and/or learn of areas for improvement. As noted in chapter VI, a similar type of evaluation already exists on campus in the form of student evaluations of professors.

It was also suggested that certain supervisors and managers need to be more responsive when allegations of inappropriate behavior or situations are brought to their attention. It would be helpful to educate supervisors and managers about the avenues for action available to them when a complaint such as one regarding racist jokes is brought to their attention. According to the 1996 *Federal Contractors Program Second Compliance Review*, the Office of Human Rights currently offers courses regarding responding to complaints of harassment (p. 43). It would be beneficial if attendance at such courses could be encouraged.

Recognition of Education Received Outside of Canada

It was recommended that a program be implemented which would assist immigrants in having their credentials assessed and accredited in Canada. According to Ms. Caskey, assessment or accreditation of professional or degree-related credentials is not a significant issue for non-academic (support) positions. Apparently, the majority of non-academic (support) positions do not *require* a degree. Usually if a degree is mentioned, the job posting states 'degree preferred.' Ms. Caskey further explained that when non-academic (support) positions are being filled, the requirements focus more on experience or on required 'skill sets' rather than official credentials. However, high school can be indicated as a requirement for such positions.

It appeared that many of the participants had attained professional or degree-related credentials in their country of origin. These participants are currently 'underemployed' in positions that do not require such credentials. Thus, assessment and accreditation of credentials is a significant issue for these individuals. According to Cynthia Caskey of the Human Resource Group, the evaluation of credentials for licensed or regulated professions such as physicians and engineers is often handled through provincial or national agencies. In this case, the University could inform employees of the specific agencies which are in charge of assessment and accreditation of credentials for the various professions.

There is also an agency run by the Department of Labor which assists immigrants in having their qualifications assessed. The International Qualifications Assessment Service assists with the assessment of education and credentials for regulated/licensed and non-regulated/non-licensed occupations. This service assists immigrants in accessing the labor market or educational institutions. It is recommended that the University of Alberta inform employees and prospective employees about these services. Such a program could be of assistance to those who are pursuing professional fields and thus may wish to apply for academic positions. It could also be of assistance to employees who obtained high school or trade certification in other countries and want to have it accredited in order to apply for non-academic (support) positions.

English Language Ability

Several participants suggested that English as A Second Language (ESL) courses be made available to any employee who desires or requires this training. The University presently allows for ESL training to be funded for eligible employees through the Human Resources Development Fund. However, some employees do not appear to be aware of this. It is thus suggested that of communication be improved in order to ensure that all employees are aware of this opportunity.

Orientation

It was recommended that the University offer a comprehensive orientation to all employees. It was also suggested that orientations could serve as an important avenue for addressing some of the issues that are relevant to employment equity, e.g., expectations regarding the behavior of employees.

It was suggested that a comprehensive University-administered orientation would enable more effective dissemination of information regarding such issues as job training and career development opportunities. Orientations could also include any employees who have worked at the University for a several years during which time the policies and procedures may have changed. This orientation could provide an opportunity for staff to learn about these changes.

As mentioned in chapter VI, the University does not currently offer a centrally administered orientation for all staff. The responsibility for orienting new staff has been designated to the departments. It may be beneficial from an employment equity standpoint to return to a centrally administered orientation to ensure that certain fundamental issues such as training and development can be highlighted and encouraged. Another alternative could involve increasing the accountability of departments to ensure that they are providing the appropriate 'orientation' information to all new employees.

Accommodation and Maintenance of Religious and Cultural Traditions

Due to the confusion regarding special arrangements that can be made to accommodate the religious and cultural traditions/practices of certain employees, it is recommended that a formal policy regarding this issue be introduced.

Such a policy is also recommended in *Opening Doors*

> The Vice-President (Academic) and (Finance and Administration) should prepare and submit to GFC and the Board of Governors for approval a

> policy respecting faculty and staff requests to observe non-majority religious holidays. (p. 72)

According to Cathy Anne Pachnowski, Employment Equity Advisor for the Office of Human Rights, this initiative is currently well underway. During the past few years, the Office of Human Rights has also undertaken several initiatives related to accommodation of religious and cultural traditions. They have sold the Multifaith Calendars which indicate the religious festivals for many majority and non-majority faiths. In addition, in 1996, the Office of Human Rights distributed to all Deans, Directors and Chairs, a list of the major religious festivals for the following faiths: Aboriginal Peoples, the Baha'i Faith, Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, Jainism, Judaism, Shinto, Sikhism, Unitarianism, and Zoroastrianism.

With regard to maintenance of religious and cultural traditions, it was recommended that the University strive to provide an employment environment in which diversity is appreciated and encouraged. This type of environment would allow employees to feel free to maintain their religious and cultural traditions. Of course, many may still choose to relinquish certain aspects of these practices/traditions but visible minorities should not feel obligated to do so. It is important to note that the University has undertaken some specific measures to demonstrate that diversity is encouraged. For example, the Office of Human Rights has produced a new diversity video entitled *The University of Alberta - A Place to Thrive*, which stresses that the University welcomes diversity and is committed to creating a diverse academic and employment environment. These kinds of initiatives in conjunction with the appropriate structural change should be encouraged.

Recruitment and Selection

It was recommended that the University develop a mechanism to monitor and evaluate recruitment and selection. It was suggested that a record should be kept of applicants, their qualifications, experience and other related records. It was also suggested that the University keep records of those hired so that the experiences of designated groups in this area could be analyzed. It appears that such an initiative is already being undertaken. The 1995/96 Annual Report to GFC regarding *Opening Doors* states that a form is currently being developed

> through which to collect data regarding recruitment and selection activities. The information provided on the Recruitment Process Report Form will enable the appropriate Vice-President to assess whether or not appointments are being made in accordance with appropriate University policies and guidelines including those related to employment equity.... (p. 4)

Several participants felt that decentralized recruiting may disfavor members of visible minorities. It was thus recommended by participants that all recruitment should be conducted centrally through the Human Resource Group. Currently certain aspects of the recruitment process are coordinated through HRG such as the initial competition. However, the recruitment *decision* is completely decentralized. According to Cynthia Caskey in the Human Resources Group, HRG currently offers services such as reviewing applications, preparing a short list of candidates, preparing interview questions, attending the actual interview and doing reference checks. However, departments are not obliged to utilize these services and can complete most of the recruitment process without any assistance from HRG. Nevertheless, Ms. Caskey indicated that approximately 60% of departments currently utilize the services offered by HRG.

In this regard, it is interesting to note that the University is planning to further decentralize this process. According to the *FCP Second Compliance Review*, "HRG is developing a training program to help departments handle their own recruitment and selection" (p. 52). If the appropriate mechanisms to ensure accountability are not implemented, such decentralization could potentially lead to a decreased ability to ensure that equitable recruitment and selection standards are followed. It is thus recommended that systems of accountability related to recruitment and selection practices be implemented.

As some participants alleged that certain vacancies are filled without being centrally advertised, they recommended that all vacancies be centrally advertised. According to Cynthia Caskey in the Human Resource Group, the HRG primarily coordinates the competition for continuing positions while recruitment for many casual or temporary positions is handled by departments. Perhaps the position that this participant was referring to was casual or temporary.

In addition, since some participants claimed that they were asked inappropriate questions during the interview process, it is recommended that those who conduct interviews, follow the University of Alberta's recommendations regarding recruitment. This recommendation states that at least one member of a selection committee should attend the session offered by the Office of Human Rights entitled: *Employment Equity and Human Rights Considerations in Non-Academic Staff Selection.*

Having more than one person involved in the selection process is also beneficial. This recommendation has been addressed in Objective 4N.10 of *Opening Doors.* The *Federal Contractors Program Second Compliance Review* states

> the Vice-President (Finance and Administration) should require that at least two people be involved in the selection of non-academic staff and that at least one of these two people must have completed the University's training program on the selection of non-academic staff. (p. 53)

It is noted in the 1996 compliance review that this suggestion is recommended in all training programs regarding the selection of non-academic staff.

Another suggestion was the expansion of outreach initiatives with the intention of encouraging visible minorities to apply for positions at the University of Alberta. It is noted that the University has already undertaken several initiatives in this area. For example, all employment opportunity bulletins are regularly distributed though Equi-Link, a job information service for community agencies associated with the designated groups. In addition, the new diversity video which was produced by the Office of Human Rights can be utilized to encourage members of visible minority groups to apply for employment at the University of Alberta. Perhaps this video could be shown to agencies community groups associated with the designated groups.

It was noted, however, that another outreach initiative undertaken by the University in 1992 was not very successful. According to the *Federal Contractors Program Second Compliance Review*, HRG

> placed carefully worded awareness advertisements in media targeted to designated groups. The advertisements were misinterpreted and taken to mean that HRG had specific jobs available for designated groups, when in fact they did not. (p. 50)

Since this time, this initiative has been under review.

Training and Development

It was recommended that the University track and monitor employees with respect to training and development in order to ascertain to what degree visible minorities are utilizing their job training and career development opportunities. Objective 2.3, as outlined in *Opening Doors* and the *Federal Contractors Program Second Compliance Review* states that the University should

> analyze the use made by academic and non-academic staff of educational, training, and professional development, professional leave, and travel benefit programs, in order to evaluate the participation by members of designated groups. (p. 39)

According to the 1996 *Federal Contractors Program Second Compliance Review*, this analysis has not yet been undertaken.

Actively encouraging all employees - especially visible minorities to utilize their job training and career development opportunities was also suggested. In order to ensure that employees are aware of their job training and career development opportunities, it is necessary to ensure that all employees receive the appropriate information. According to Cynthia Caskey of the Human Resource Group, the last *Guide to Training and Development Services and Policies* was mailed out in 1992. However, the Human Resource Group has just completed a revised version of this information which will be distributed to each eligible employee during the summer of 1997.

In addition, it would be beneficial to implement the recommendation mentioned in *Opening Doors,* that the Human Resource Group

> expand and publicize the service which it currently provides in career planning for non-academic staff; new elements should include completion of the job progression ladder (showing which positions have prerequisites), a library of non-academic position descriptions to be consulted upon request, a workshop on career planning at the University, and a training program for supervisors on career coaching. (p. 70)

This type of career guidance would be beneficial for all employees at the University of Alberta. According to Cynthia Caskey, the Human Resource Group has not been able to undertake this initiative due to limited resources.

In light of the confusion regarding many aspects of the Human Resource Development Fund, the training program for supervisors on career coaching would be extremely beneficial. Since supervisors are asked to approve any time off for training that takes place during office hours, they are required to sign the HRDF request form. Many employees appear to be under that impression that it is the role of the supervisor to approve of the content of the course. Although, according to Ms. Caskey, it is not the duty of the supervisor to approve or disapprove of the content of the course, many participants alleged that this has been happening. The result is that some supervisors have allegedly informed certain employees that a course would not be funded when according to *Guide to Training and Development Services and Policies* it could have been funded. In order to ensure that such occurrences are not taking place, it is recommended that the HRG clearly communicate that it is not the role of the supervisor to approve or disapprove of the content of a course.

There also appeared to be confusion with regard to the type of training which could be funded. Article 33.10 of the *Agreement Between the Board of*

Governors of the University of Alberta and the Non-Academic Staff Association states

> where training under this Article takes place during the employee's regular work hours, his department head shall grant him the necessary time off with pay, provided the training is of mutual benefit to the employee and the department. (p. 61)

Perhaps some supervisors have misunderstood the above article to mean that *all* training has to be of mutual benefit to the employee and the department. According to Ms. Caskey, this is not the case. As discussed earlier, training can be taken to prepare oneself for a different position or a promotion. In this case, the training may not directly benefit *the department* but it would benefit *the University*. It is thus recommended that Article 33.10 be amended to state "...his [or her] department head shall grant him [or her] the necessary time off with pay, provided the training is of mutual benefit to the employee and the University."

It is also suggested that the University develop a policy which would inform all employees regarding their entitlement to time off during working hours for professional development. When the amount of time off requires negotiation between the supervisor and the employee or is left to the discretion of the supervisor, inequities can occur whereby one employee is allowed to pursue training and development during office hours while another is not.

Promotion and Advancement

It was suggested that the University track and monitor visible minority employees to ascertain the degree to which they are being promoted. Such a recommendation has already been made in *Opening Doors*. Objective 2.5 as outlined in the *FCP Second Compliance Review* states that the University "should monitor and analyze participation and success rates of designated-groups of non-academic staff in applications for promotion...(p. 39). According to the compliance review, applications for promotions have not been monitored.

When evaluating 'merit,' 'excellence' and 'suitability,' and what constitutes being 'qualified', it was suggested that there is a need to be open to alternative definitions of these concepts. There is a need to consider that some groups have historically had unequal access to education and thus may not be able to compete from the point of view of credentials until the historical inequalities in access to education have been addressed. Furthermore, because those who belong to the 'majority' groups have been able to define what is meant by 'merit', 'suitability,' and 'excellence,' it is necessary to consider the ramifications that this may have on the ability of 'non-majority' groups to 'measure-up' to majority standards.

Another recommendation was that selection decisions involve more than one individual to ensure that the decision of whether or not to promote an employee is not affected by the possible biases of *one* individual. The University of Alberta has already taken steps to address this concern. It is currently recommended that selection committees comprise at least two people.

More Visible Minorities in Supervisory Positions

Monitoring the number of staff in supervisory and managerial positions was suggested by participants. This is already being done by the Office of Human Rights through the Employment Equity Census. The Office of Human Rights maintains statistics regarding the type of positions in which individuals are employed. Each position is classified according to an occupational code which corresponds to a specific type of position. The Office of Human Rights is thus able to determine which individuals are in supervisory or managerial level positions. However, this information is not entirely complete because it is determined by the response rate to the Employment Equity Census which was 86.8% as of December 31, 1995.

It was also suggested that the University needs to recruit and promote more visible minorities into supervisory and managerial positions.

Recommendations Related to the Change Process

Targets for Implementation

Participants suggested that the University set targets for the implementation of employment equity initiatives. *Opening Doors* represents a comprehensive implementation plan for employment equity goals and each recommendation or objective was assigned a target date of completion. According to the *1995/96 Annual Report to General Faculties Council* regarding *Opening Doors*, thus far "one-third (or 25) [of the recommendations] are complete or ongoing; 34 are underway or partially complete; [and] 15 have not been addressed" (p. 2). According to the *Federal Contractors Program Second Compliance Review*, the University has recently reestablished the Employment Equity Committee in order to "review outstanding recommendations...determine new priorities and set new time-lines" (p. 38) Thus, targets for implementation will be closely monitored and implemented.

Accountability

Implementation plans are not useful unless there is accountability to ensure that they are carried out. Several participants recommended that there needs to be accountability to ensure that the plans are initially implemented and systematically followed.

Currently, there are several mechanisms through which accountability for employment equity initiatives is ensured. One of the mechanisms is outlined in Objective 3.5 of *Opening Doors*

> the Vice-Presidents (Academic) and (Finance and Administration), in consultation with the Office of Human Rights, should report annually to the University community on progress toward the accomplishment of the recommendations contained in this report and on the changing representation of the designated groups within the University's workforce. (p. 64)

Thus far, there have been two of these annual reports provided to General Faculties Council. The first report covered the period 1994/95; the second report for 1995/96 was recently released.

Another mechanism of accountability is the on-going on-site reviews by the Federal Contractors Program. (Background on this program is found in chapter II). The latest review took place in July, 1996. After the University's Employment Equity Advisor submitted a detailed report of the progress made regarding the implementation of *Opening Doors*, the Acting Chief of the Federal Contractors Program deemed that the University remains in compliance with the program. However, in order to maintain this status, the University was instructed to carry out certain initiatives. This review process encourages the University to maintain a high level of accountability.

In the future, there is also the possibility of units being required to submit unit-level employment equity plans. Perhaps the implementation of unit-level employment equity plans would provide enhanced levels of accountability. In addition, accountability with regard to employment equity goals could be encouraged by linking it to the performance appraisal process especially for supervisors and managers. It would be beneficial if an aspect of the performance appraisal could evaluate supervisors and managers on their ability to maintain a productive, creative, healthy, and equitable work environment.

Creating an Inclusive Environment

Employees need to feel included in the employment equity process in order to understand its goals and be encouraged to support them. One aspect of being an inclusive organization involves ensuring that all employees receive information regarding important issues such as training and development and issue-specific workshops such as those relating to harassment or employment equity. Another aspect of being an inclusive organization involves ensuring that all information is written in plain language so that it can be understood by each and every employee. Perhaps it would be helpful to do an 'audit' of the information which is currently intended for employees, to ascertain if it is written in plain language and can be understood by everyone.

Another aspect of creating an inclusive environment involves allowing for the opinions of all employees to be represented. The opinions and views of all parties in the University community need to be heard. Several universities such as York University and McMaster University have conducted or are in the process of conducting employment and educational equity studies. These studies allow for the views of members of the university community to be heard. This is vital in order to take action which will address the concerns of all parties. The University will have such an opportunity through a work climate study that is currently being undertaken by the Office of Human Rights. This study will include *all* part- and full-time continuing academic and support employees.

Furthermore, an inclusive strategy must not involve unilateral decision-making. After asking for the opinions of everyone concerned, those who are in positions of power must not make all of the decisions about the shape the University is to take. Decisions must not be made in a top down manner only. This kind of strategy does not encourage every member of the University community to develop a sense of ownership in the process. In order to make progress, people need to contribute to the process and feel that their contribution is making a difference. When all parties are consulted and involved in the actual implementation of recommendations, this creates a sense of solidarity between groups who may have previously been in an oppositional stance toward one another.

Enlarge the Scope of this Employment Equity Study

It was suggested that the scope of this study be enlarged to include all employees at the University of Alberta. Participants also recommended that such studies be conducted frequently so that the University can keep apprised of the concerns and needs of all employees. As mentioned above, the Office of Human Rights has already begun work on a work climate study of all part- and full-time continuing academic and support employees.

Theoretical Reflections

This study has been guided by the conceptual and theoretical insights, issues, and discourses within the fields of multiculturalism, human rights and employment equity. This study has resulted in a deeper and more critical understanding of some of the theoretical underpinnings of employment equity discourse.

Many theorists (McCarthy and Crichlow, 1993; Fay, 1996; Rizvi, 1993; Said, 1993; Bhabha, 1994) stress the importance of adopting an anti-essentialist view of culture, race, and identity. They assert that social groups should not be treated as stable or homogenous entities whose members possess intrinsic or unvarying characteristics that render them completely different from other groups.

Bhabha (1994) underlines the relational character of culture, race, and identity through the theory of hybridity which sees all cultures, ethnicities and identities as constantly interacting with and influencing one another. Thus, all cultures, ethnicities and identities are hybrid - a composite of those with whom they have interacted. Said (1993) further elaborates on the relational character of culture, ethnicity and identity by highlighting the role that the past has on the present. Not only is the culture, ethnicity, and identity of an individual affected by those around them, but by past occurrences whose 'ripples' continue to be felt through the ages. Past and present are seen as co-existing and informing one another. Fay (1996) underlines the divergent and often antagonistic interests of members of cultural groups. Members of one group may have different religious and political beliefs, levels of education, values and so forth.

Since this study is informed by the discourses of the above mentioned theorists, it is necessary to question whether or not employment equity strategies, as they are currently conceived, fully take into consideration the hybrid nature of culture, race and identity. Does employment equity discourse attempt to treat social groups as homogenous entities or does it acknowledge the possibility of different interests and perspectives within a given group.

Synnott and Howes (1996) argue that employment equity discourse tends to focus on 'ethnicity' as the primary determinant of inequality. As noted by Khayatt (1994) and Kivel (1996), other variables need to be considered when evaluating inequality such as class, gender, age, sexual orientation, religious and political beliefs and level of education. The identity of every individual is created by the intersection and interaction of these variables.

Kivel (1996) emphasizes that if initiatives taken to reduce inequality - such as employment equity - do not take these multiple levels of oppression into consideration, there is a risk of producing what Kivel calls a 'multicultural ruling class.' A facade of equality can be created by employing proportionate numbers of visible minorities. However, it is important to ask what proportion of those visible minorities are female and in which positions are they employed. If only upper or middle class male visible minorities are recruited into the workforce, this does not create a truly equitable environment. Furthermore, if visible minorities are primarily employed in low-paying positions with little or no chance for upward mobility, this is not equitable either.

Synnott and Howes (1996) believe that lumping such a diverse group of people together as 'visible minorities' can be problematic because those who need the most assistance and those who need the least assistance will receive equal amounts of assistance. They suggest, therefore, that some groups who fall within the group 'visible minorities' should receive more assistance than others. Obviously, it is also important that any initiatives which address racism or discrimination include both visible minorities and Aboriginal peoples since the latter have experienced parallel or even more severe problems.

Haymes (1995) also made a significant observation. He perceived that the focus of employment equity on designated groups rather than on majority groups, helps to avoid issues regarding the power and privilege of dominant groups. Haymes suggests that employment equity endeavors should also focus on revealing the effects of 'white' power and privilege. Kivel (1996) believes that it is important for dominant groups to acknowledge the role they play in maintaining unjust situations so that they begin to make positive change.

Another aspect of employment equity discourse which can be called into question is its apparent commitment to the principle of 'merit.' As discussed in Chapter II, what is believed to be 'normal,' 'neutral,' and 'objective' are frequently ideas that the socially, politically and economically powerful segment of society deem to be important. Thus, is it easy for policies and principles initiated by the dominant segment of society to disadvantage those who are not a part of this group. As McLaren (1995) states, it is necessary to question the ideological interests behind meaning or discourse. When employment equity discourse makes reference to 'merit' or 'standards,' it is necessary to question whose concept of 'merit' and whose 'standards' are being referred to? Which group established the standards and according to whose value system? For example, which group decided that credentials from 'other' countries may not be as suitable as those from 'Western' countries?

Furthermore, if we are to subscribe to the principle of 'merit' as defined by the dominant group, there is a need to examine why some individuals seem consistently *not* to have the same degree of 'excellence' or 'merit' as those who belong to the dominant group. It is necessary to question whether our society is really a 'meritocracy' where every individual can achieve the same level of 'success' with the appropriate level of effort. It is necessary to look outside the workplace at the social structures and barriers which limit individual and group achievement. In doing so, it becomes apparent that society's opportunities and rewards are not allocated equally. All of the above issues need to be taken into consideration when considering the concept of 'merit.'

When attempting to address inequality within the workplace, employment equity strategists need to consider the impact of measures such as special training programs for individuals who have historically had inequitable access to education. Do these programs actually reduce inequality or do they serve as 'compensation' while inequality in society as a whole remains unaddressed?

Although certain employment equity strategies have acknowledged some of the above mentioned points, employment equity discourse could be enhanced by developing more comprehensive plans to address these issues.

Methodological Issues

After reflecting upon aspects of the research methodology utilized during this research, two suggestions for improvement can be made. The first suggestion involves the timing of the study. Because the mail-out of the questionnaire package was scheduled during the summer and recurring-term employees work from September to April, this group of employees was not included in the sample. Because the Office of Human Rights was able to ascertain from the Employment Equity Census data that there were only five visible minority employees in this category, a decision was made to proceed with the mail-out as scheduled despite the fact that this group would not be included in the sample. However, it is recommended that future studies keep this factor in mind and attempt to include recurring-term employees in the sample.

The second suggestion for improvement involves the transcription of the interviews. After having the interviews transcribed verbatim, the transcripts were returned to the interviewees so that they could be reviewed and edited. Upon receiving the transcripts, the majority of the interviewees expressed concern with regard to the quality of English. Since I had not edited interview transcripts for composition or style, and the language used was informal and colloquial, the interviewees were concerned that they would be portrayed as 'less than intelligent.' Obviously a transcript of any casual conversation will not resemble a formal essay or speech; nonetheless, it is important not to represent the interviewees in an unflattering light. It is thus suggested that interview transcripts be edited by the researcher for composition and style prior to being returned to the interviewee. It is important to ensure, however, that the editorial changes do not alter the content of the transcript in any way. This strategy can hopefully avoid causing undue distress to the interviewees.

Suggestions for Further Research

It is suggested that the University undertake a study of the employment environment as it is perceived by all academic and support employees. The Office of Human Rights is currently undertaking a work climate study involving all part- and full-time continuing academic and support employees. The findings from this study should prove to be extremely useful and assist with developing strategies for future employment equity initiatives on campus.

Concluding Note

It is hoped that the findings and recommendations from this study will assist in highlighting the issues which are of concern to the visible minority employees who participated in the research project. It is also hoped that the recommendations will provide a basis for future action. Although it is important to acknowledge the progress with regard to employment equity that has been made thus far, we can not congratulate ourselves if certain members of the University of Alberta community continue to be negatively affected by individual attitudes and institutional practices which render their daily experiences less than equitable. As Kivel (1996) aptly states: "we must judge our efforts at justice by the justice they produce" (p. 162).

FOOTNOTES

Chapter III

[1] The descriptions corresponding to the Major Occupational Codes below were taken from *Opening Doors: A Plan for Employment Equity at the University of Alberta* (pp. 17-20).

01/Upper Level Managers
Employees holding the most senior positions in large firms and corporations. They are responsible for the corporation's policy and strategic planning, and for directing and controlling the functions of the organization. At the University of Alberta, this grouping includes the President and Vice-Presidents, even though these positions would not be considered Upper Level Managers by Census Canada.

02/Middle and Other Managers
Middle and other managers receive information from upper level managers and administer the organization's policy and operations through subordinate managers and supervisors. At the University of Alberta, this grouping includes, but is not limited to, Associate-Vice Presidents, Deans, Department Chairs, Directors, ... APOs and Librarians.

03/Professionals
Professionals usually need either university graduation or extended formal training and often belong to a professional association. At the University of Alberta, this grouping includes, but is not limited to University Teachers. Counsellors, librarians, FSO's....

04/Semi-Professionals and Technicians
Workers in these occupations are usually required to have the equivalent of two years of post-secondary education, such as offered in technical schools and community colleges. At the University of Alberta, this grouping includes, but is not limited to, Photographers, Dental Assistants, and Technicians.

05/Supervisors
Supervisors are considered non-management, first line coordinators of white collar workers; may, but usually do not, perform any duties of the employees they supervise. At the University of Alberta, this grouping includes, but is not limited to, Administrative Assistants and Supervisors.

06/Foremen/women

Foremen/women are non-management first-line supervisors of blue collar workers. At the University of Alberta, this grouping includes, but is not limited to, Building Superintendents and Construction Supervisors.

07/Clerical Workers

Workers performing clerical work in which the activities are predominantly non-manual. At the University of Alberta, this grouping includes, but is not limited to, Library Assistants, Secretaries and Clerk Typists.

08/Sales Workers

Sales workers are engaged in selling products. No employees at the University of Alberta have been classified in this occupational group.

09/Service Workers

Workers who provide personal service. At the University of Alberta, this grouping includes, but is not limited to, Food Service Workers, Security Officers and Laboratory Assistants.

10/Skilled Crafts and Trades

Manual workers of a high skill level having a comprehensive knowledge of the processes involved in their work. They are frequently journeymen/women who have had an extensive period of training. At the University of Alberta, this grouping includes, but is not limited to, Pipefitters, Electricians, Carpenters, Glassblowers and Machinists.

11/Semi-Skilled Manual Workers

Manual workers who perform duties that usually require a few months of specific on-the-job training. At the University of Alberta, this grouping includes, but is not limited to, Vehicle Operators and Animal Assistants.

12/Other Manual Workers

Workers in blue collar jobs which generally require only a few days of on-the-job training. At the University of Alberta, this grouping includes, but is not limited to, Maintenance Workers and Building Service Workers.

Chapter IV

1 The following categories were utilized to classify respondents by ethnic or cultural group. These are used by Census Canada.

East/Southeast Asian :	Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Filipino, Indonesian, Malay, Other Asian, Indo-

	Chinese (Burmese, Cambodian, Laotian, Thai, Vietnamese)
East Indian:	South Asian Origins: Bangladeshi, East Indian, Pakistani, Singhalese, Tamil, Bengali, Gujarati, Punjabi, Sri Lankan
Middle Eastern:	Arab Origins: Arab, Egyptian, Lebanese, Palestinian, Syrian
West Indian:	Cuban, Haitian, Jamaican, Other Caribbean, Puerto Rican, Other West Indian
Latin American:	Argentinean, Brazilian, Chilean, Ecuadorian, Mexican, Peruvian and Other
Black:	Black origins: African Black, Canadian Black, West Indian Black, Black American, Other Black

[2] Question six asked respondents who were born outside of Canada to indicate how many years, in total, they had lived in Canada. Unfortunately, due to incorrect instructions provided which resulted in the majority of participants not responding to the question, the data from this question can not be utilized.

The primary reason for asking this question was to determine if a longer length of residence in Canada resulted in less frequent experiences of racist behavior, stereotyping, feelings of having to work harder than co-workers who are not visible minorities and so forth.

It was postulated that those who have lived in Canada for only a short period of time, may state more strongly that they feel the University of Alberta needs to make changes to create a more equitable (fair) working environment.

An attempt was made to utilize the data from question one, regarding total number of years employed at the University of Alberta, to determine if the above assumptions were true. The results of this attempt are discussed in Chapter IV.

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APPENDIX A

LETTER TO MEMBERS OF THE CANADIAN UNIVERSITIES EMPLOYMENT EQUITY NETWORK (CUEEN)

University of Alberta
Edmonton

Department of Educational Policy Studies
Educational Administration, Educational Foundations, Adult and Higher Education
Faculty of Education

Canada T6G 2G5

7-104 Education Building North,
Telephone (403) 492-7625
Fax (403) 492-2024

April 2, 1996

«Title» «FirstName» «LastName»
«JobTitle» «Company»
«Address1» «Address2»
«City», «State» «PostalCode»

Dear «Title» «LastName»:

RE: STUDY OF THE EMPLOYMENT ENVIRONMENT AT THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA AS IT IS EXPERIENCED BY VISIBLE MINORITY EMPLOYEES IN SUPPORT POSITIONS

I am a graduate student enrolled in the Master of Education program specializing in International/Intercultural Education at the University of Alberta. I am currently completing my thesis under the supervision of Dr. S.H. Toh on The Employment Environment at the University of Alberta as it is Experienced by Visible Minority Employees in Support Positions. This research project has been funded by the University of Alberta's Employment Equity Discretionary Fund and is supported by the Office of Human Rights at the University of Alberta.

Through the use of a survey/questionnaire, and informal interviews, it is my intention to explore the opinions of visible minority employees in support positions as they relate to the overall employment environment, recruitment policies, evaluation and promotion policies, and termination and disciplinary policies. It is also my intention to obtain feedback from visible minority employees as to which services the University of Alberta should strive to offer in order to create a more hospitable employment environment.

I am writing to you for several reasons:

1.) to inquire if any similar studies (formal and/or informal) have been undertaken at your institution. If so, I would be most grateful if you could share any written reports or documentation about your findings. If not, I would be interested to know if there are intentions to complete such a study.

2.) to request any information that you could provide me with concerning any initiatives, services and policies that are currently in place or are soon to be implemented with regards to visible minorities in support positions.

While I certainly recognize the value of your time, I would very much appreciate receiving your response by May 24, 1996. If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to send me an E-Mail message at: Melanie.Lizotte@ualberta.ca. Thank you in advance for your reply which can be returned to: Mélanie Lizotte, Educational Policy Studies, Education North, 7-104, University of Alberta, Edmonton, Alberta, T6G 2G5.

Sincerely,

Mélanie Lizotte

APPENDIX B

MEMO FROM OFFICE OF HUMAN RIGHTS TO ALL DEANS, DIRECTORS, CHAIRS AND PERSONNEL CONTACTS

University of Alberta Inter-departmental Correspondence

to: **Personnel Contacts**

date: **August 6, 1996**

our file:

your file:

from: **Cathy Anne Pachnowski**
Employment Equity Advisor
Office of Human Rights, 252 Athabasca Hall

subject: **Upcoming Employment Equity Study of Visible Minorities in Support Positions**

I am writing to let you know of an upcoming employment equity study on the perceptions of visible minorities in support positions at the University. Opening Doors acknowledges the importance of developing a work environment in which all employees feel welcome and valued. The study takes the form of a questionnaire I will be sending to support staff members who have identified themselves as visible minorities on the Employment Equity Census.

It asks questions about their experiences working on campus, including whether they have encountered behaviour they consider to be racist, whether they have requested special arrangements to celebrate specific religious/cultural practices, orientation received on starting employment, awareness of the employment equity program, recruitment and selection procedures, training and career development opportunities, working conditions, and related questions. It takes about 20 minutes to complete. The Office of Human Rights will use the results as an aid in future employment equity programming.

I am working on this study with Melanie Lizotte, a Masters student in the Faculty of Education. She developed it as part of her graduate research. She will be collating the information, summarizing the results and making recommendations for action to the University's Employment Equity Committee. As employees will be asked not to put their names on the forms, neither Ms Lizotte nor I will know who has responded. Participation is voluntary. Employees who prefer not to fill out the questionnaire do not have to do so.

The Office of Human Rights will mail out the questionnaires on August 19, 1996. I will not provide Ms Lizotte with the names or departments of employees receiving the questionnaire.

The purpose of this memo is to let you know that it will be coming in case you are asked questions about it and to ask for your cooperation in encouraging employees to fill it out.

If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to call me at #3020 (except during the week of August 12 - 16, 1996 as I will be away).

C. A. Pachnowski
Cathy Anne Pachnowski

CAP/jm
cc Deans, Directors, Chairs: For your information

APPENDIX C

QUESTIONNAIRE

EMPLOYMENT EQUITY STUDY

OF

VISIBLE MINORITY EMPLOYEES

IN SUPPORT POSITIONS

University of Alberta

1996

Employment Equity Study of Visible Minority Employees in Support Positions

Please answer the questions based on your own personal experiences at the University of Alberta. Certain questions ask about your overall experiences at the University of Alberta and other questions ask about your current position. Some questions ask you to answer by circling the number which most accurately reflects your opinion or circumstance. Other questions ask you to provide a short answer or to comment in your own words. This questionnaire should take about 15 to 20 minutes to complete. If you would like help completing the questionnaire or if you have any questions, please contact Melanie Lizotte between 5:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m. at 468-5957.

A. The first set of questions will provide background information which will assist in the analysis of the results of the questionnaire.

1. In total, how many years have you been employed at the University of Alberta? Please write the number of years in the space below. If you have been working at the University of Alberta for less than one year, please write "0".

   Number of years employed at the University of Alberta: ______

2. Are you a part-time or full-time employee?

   Part-time 1
   Full-time 2

3. Are you female or male?

   Female 1
   Male 2

4. Please indicate the ethnic or cultural group(s) to which you feel you belong.

   ____

   ____

5. Please indicate whether or not you were born in Canada.

   Born in Canada .... 1 → **Go to Question 6**
   Born outside of Canada .... 2 → **Go to Question 7a**

6. In total, how many years have you lived in Canada? Please write the number of years in the space below. If you have lived in Canada for less than one year, please write "0".

Number of years lived in Canada: ________________

B. Please answer the following questions based on your employment experiences at the University of Alberta in general.

7a. Have you ever experienced behavior or situations which you would consider to be racist towards visible minorities? *(e.g. racial jokes, racial insults, graffiti)*

Yes.................... 1
No...................... 2

7b. Please add any comments you wish to make about this issue.

____
____
____

8a. Have you ever experienced stereotyping related to your ethnic or cultural heritage? *(A stereotype is a generalization made about all members of a group. Stereotyping is when people are judged based on generalizations about their membership in a group rather than on their own individual characteristics.)*

Yes.................... 1
No...................... 2

8b. Please add any comments you wish to make about this issue.

____
____
____

9a. In order to receive the same recognition, do you feel that you have to work harder than co-workers who are not visible minority employees?

Yes.................... 1
No...................... 2

9b. Please add any comments you wish to make about this issue.

____
____
____

10. Have you received any of your education outside of Canada?

Yes.................... 1 ➡ **Go to Question 11a**
No .... 2 ➡ **Go to Question 12**

11a. Do you feel that your education which was received outside of Canada has been fairly recognized by the University of Alberta?

Yes.................... 1
No 2

11b. Please add any comments you wish to make about this issue.

____

____

12. Do you feel that it is important for the University of Alberta to make special arrangements in order to allow employees to celebrate/practice specific religious/cultural traditions?

Yes.................... 1
No 2

13. Have you ever requested special arrangements in order to allow you to celebrate/practice specific religious/cultural practices or traditions?

Yes.................... 1 ➡ **Go to Question 14a**
No .... 2 ➡ **Go to Question 14c**

14a. Please indicate how satisfied you were with how your request was handled.

Very Dissatisfied				**Very Satisfied**
1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**

14b. Please add any comments about this issue.

____

____

➡ **Go to Question 15**

14c. Please indicate the reason why you have not requested special arrangements. *(If you do not require special arrangements, please indicate this.)*

____

____

15. When you began your employment, did you attend an orientation? (Orientations are where University/Departmental policies, procedures, programs and services etc. are explained to new employees.)

Yes.................... 1 ➡ **Go to Question 16a**
No .... 2 ➡ **Go to Question 17**

16a. Please indicate how satisfied you were with the orientation process.

Very Dissatisfied				**Very Satisfied**
1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**

16b. Please add any comments you wish to make about the orientation process at the University of Alberta.

17. Please indicate your level of English language ability.

Poor	**Fair**	**Good**	**Very Good**	**Excellent**
1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**

18. I feel that I have experienced discrimination related to my level of English language ability.

Strongly Disagree				**Strongly Agree**
1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**

19. I feel that I have experienced discrimination related to my accent.

Strongly Disagree				**Strongly Agree**
1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**

20. Before receiving this questionnaire, were you aware that the University of Alberta has an employment equity plan entitled *Opening Doors*?

Yes.................... 1 ➡ **Go to Question 21a**
No .... 2 ➡ **Go to Question 22a**

21a. Please indicate how satisfied you are with the employment equity plan.

Very Dissatisfied				**Very Satisfied**
1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**

21b. Please add any comments you wish to make about the plan.

____

____

____

C. Please answer the following questions based on your experience with the employment procedures at the University of Alberta. Please circle the number on the scale which best reflects your own opinion. The number "1" means strongly disagree; the number "5" means strongly agree.

22a. I feel that I have experienced discrimination related to my ethnic or cultural background with respect to recruitment and selection procedures at the University of Alberta. *(Recruitment ranges from learning about the availability of a position to making inquiries about the position, to filling out application forms. Selection refers to how applicants are chosen after they have completed an application form.)*

Strongly Disagree				**Strongly Agree**
1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**

22b. Please add any comments you wish to make about the recruitment and selection procedures at the University of Alberta.

____

____

____

23. I feel that I have received adequate information regarding **training and career development opportunities** at the University of Alberta. *(E.g. Full-time and part-time continuing employees are eligible to apply for $500.00 per year from the Human Resources Development Fund. The Remission of Tuition program also pays for employees' University tuition fees after one year of service. Part-time employees are eligible for 6 course credits per year and full-time employees are eligible for 18 course credits per year.)*

Strongly Disagree				**Strongly Agree**
1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**

24. I feel that I have fully utilized my **training and career development opportunities**.

Strongly Disagree				**Strongly Agree**
1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**

25a. I feel that I have experienced discrimination related to my ethnic or cultural background with respect to access to **training and career development opportunities** at the University of Alberta.

Strongly Disagree				**Strongly Agree**
1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**

25b. Please add any comments you wish to make about **training and career development opportunities** at the University of Alberta.

____

____

26a. I feel that I have experienced discrimination related to my ethnic or cultural background with respect to **promotion and advancement practices** at the University of Alberta.

Strongly Disagree				**Strongly Agree**
1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**

26b. Please add any comments you wish to make about **promotion and advancement practices** at the University of Alberta.

____

____

27a. I feel that I have experienced discrimination related to my ethnic or cultural background with respect to **downsizing practices** at the University of Alberta. (Downsizing involves lay-offs.)

Strongly Disagree				**Strongly Agree**
1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**

27b. Please add any comments you wish to make about **downsizing practices** at the University of Alberta.

D. These questions ask about aspects of your current position.

28a. I feel that I have experienced discrimination related to my ethnic or cultural background with respect to **treatment by my supervisor(s).**

Strongly Disagree				**Strongly Agree**
1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**

28b. Please add any comments you wish to make about **treatment by your supervisor(s).**

29a. I feel that I have experienced discrimination related to my ethnic or cultural background with respect to the **performance review/evaluation process.**

Strongly Disagree				**Strongly Agree**
1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**

29b. Please add any comments you wish to make about the **performance review/evaluation process.**

30a. I feel that I have experienced discrimination related to my ethnic or cultural background with respect to treatment by my co-workers.

Strongly Disagree				**Strongly Agree**
1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**

30b. Please add any comments you wish to make about treatment by your co-workers.

____

____

____

E. These questions ask for your input and suggestions on how the employment equity program at the University of Alberta can be improved in the future.

31. In your opinion, do you think that the University of Alberta needs to make changes to create a more equitable (fair) employment environment for visible minority employees?

Yes.................... 1 ➡ **Go to Question 32**
No..................... 2

32. If you feel that there are things that the University of Alberta could do to create a more equitable (fair) environment for visible minority employees, please list them below.

____

____

____

____

____

This is the end of the questionnaire. Please put it in the return envelope marked: *Office of Human Rights, 252 Athabasca Hall*, and place it in campus mail. Thank you very much for your participation.

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

APPENDIX D

COVER LETTER FROM RESEARCHER

University of Alberta
Edmonton

Canada T6G 2G5

Department of Educational Policy Studies
Educational Administration, Educational Foundations, Adult and Higher Education
Faculty of Education

7-104 Education Building North,
Telephone (403) 492-7625
Fax (403) 492-2024

August 19, 1996

Warm Greetings:

I am writing to ask for your help in gathering information about what it is like to work at the University of Alberta. I am a graduate student in the International/Intercultural Education program. I am studying human rights education under the supervision of Dr. S.H. Toh. My research focuses on the experiences of visible minority support staff who are working at the University of Alberta. The University of Alberta has an employment equity plan called *Opening Doors*[1] which stresses the need for such a study, and financial assistance[2] has been provided to support this research.

It would be very helpful if you would complete the attached questionnaire which has been mailed to you by the Office of Human Rights. Please do not write your name on it. I do not have your name and do not need it. Please return your completed questionnaire using the envelope that has been provided.

I would also like to meet individually with approximately ten people who would be interested in providing more information about their employment experiences at the University of Alberta. The meeting should take about one hour and can be arranged at your convenience between August 26 and September 27. If you would like to meet with me, please call 468 - 5957 between 5:00 p.m. and 9:00 p.m. or leave a message on my answering machine.

A few days after our meeting, you will be given a type-written copy of our conversation. You will be able to make any changes that you wish. Your name and the area in which you work on campus (faculty, department, division, etc.,) will be kept confidential. In addition, you may decide to withdraw from the study at any point. If you do, the information that you have provided will not be included in the summary report or the final thesis.

Your comments will be extremely valuable in helping the University of Alberta learn more about your experiences while working on campus. I will write a report using the information gathered through the questionnaires and discussions. This report will contain recommendations based on the information provided by visible minority support staff. The report will be sent to the University's Employment Equity Committee and to the Office of Human Rights. A summary report of the findings will also be made available through the Office of Human Rights.

..../2

Your help is needed in this important work. Thank you in advance for your participation. I look forward to receiving your questionnaire and to meeting with you in person if you wish to discuss your employment experiences at the University of Alberta.

Sincerely,

Melanie Lizotte

Enclosures

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[1] *Opening Doors: A Plan for Employment Equity at the University of Alberta* acknowledges that it is important to establish "a climate favorable to the successful integration of designated group members within the organization" and to develop "a climate which will ensure that all employees can and wish to remain within the workforce." *Opening Doors* also stresses the need to develop a work environment "which welcomes and values employees on the basis of their individual contributions and skills."

[2] Financial support for this research project has been provided by the University of Alberta's Employment Equity Discretionary Fund.

APPENDIX E

COVER LETTER FROM CATHY ANNE PACHNOWSKI
OFFICE OF HUMAN RIGHTS

University of Alberta
Edmonton
Canada T6G 2E8

Office of Human Rights
252 Athabasca Hall, Telephone: (403) 492-7325
Fax: (403) 492-2990

August 19, 1996

Dear Colleague:

The University of Alberta wants to be an open and welcoming place to work for all employees. The enclosed questionnaire will help determine whether we are succeeding. I am sending it to support staff members who have identified themselves as visible minorities on the Employment Equity Census. The study will help us understand how visible minorities experience the work environment at the University of Alberta.

Please complete the questionnaire and return it to the Office of Human Rights in the attached envelope. The survey is voluntary, so if you do not wish to answer the questions, you do not have to send it back.

I am working on this study with Melanie Lizotte, a graduate student in the Faculty of Education. She developed the questionnaire and will use the results to complete her research. The Office of Human Rights will use the results to understand the issues faced by visible minorities in support positions and as a guide to future employment equity programming.

Your responses are anonymous -- neither Ms. Lizotte nor I will know your name or department when you return your survey. In sending out the survey, I have not given Ms. Lizotte your name, department, or any other information about you.

Thank you for your cooperation. If you have any questions, you can call me at 492-3020 or Melanie Lizotte at 468-5957.

Yours truly,

C. A. Pachnowski

Cathy Anne Pachnowski
Employment Equity Advisor

CAP/jm
Encl.

APPENDIX F

REMINDER CARD

REMINDER

If you have already completed the attached questionnaire, thank you for your help.

If you have not, and would like to, another copy is attached. Thank you!

(Please note: In order to use the information that you provide, we will need to receive it by September 30, 1996.)

APPENDIX G

INTERVIEW PARTICIPANT TRACKING SHEET

INTERVIEW PARTICIPANT TRACKING SHEET

Name:____
(Last) (First)

Pseudonym: __________________________________
(Interview # ___)

Phone Number: __________________________________

Address: ______________________________________
____
(For use when mailing copy of interview transcript or summary report)

Position: ____________________ **Standard Occupational Code:** _____

Full-Time or Part-Time:_______**Total # of Years Employed at U of A:**______

Gender:_________

Most Convenient Interview Times:
1. ____
2. ____
3. ____

Most Convenient Interview Locations:
1. ____
2. ____
3. ____

Date of Actual Interview: ____________________

Letter of Intent to Participate in the Study Administered: ______________

Guarantee of Confidentiality and Anonymity Administered: _____________

APPENDIX H

GUARANTEE OF CONFIDENTIALITY & ANONYMITY

GUARANTEE OF CONFIDENTIALITY AND ANONYMITY

I Mélanie Lizotte pledge to provide you ___________________________,

first name, last name

as interview participant in the study of The Employment Environment at the University of Alberta as it is Experienced by Visible Minorities in Support Positions, with a guarantee of complete confidentiality and anonymity.

At no time will your name or the area in which you work on campus (the faculty, department, division, unit etc.) be divulged. You will be assigned a pseudonym at the outset and this pseudonym will be used in data reporting and analysis.

Every effort will be made not to unintentionally reveal the department or unit within which you work through the description of particular incidents or occurrences. After reviewing a transcription of your interview, if you are apprehensive about an incident or experience that has been described, you may exercise your right to have any mention of it stricken from all areas of the study.

APPENDIX I

LETTER OF INTENT TO PARTICIPATE IN THE STUDY

Letter of Intent to Participate in the Study

Please be advised that I, ________________________________, agree to
(please print your first and last name)
participate in the research project entitled: *The Employment Environment at the University of Alberta as it is Experienced by Visible Minority Employees in Support Positions*. This agreement is made subject to the following conditions:

That the study is to be conducted as per the Ethics of Research as developed by the University of Alberta and as per the information provided within the approved Research Ethics Review Application of the Department of Educational Policy Studies. The following points are to reassure you of your rights as a participant in this project.

a) **My participation in this interview is entirely voluntary and, as a participant, I am guaranteed confidentiality and anonymity. Under no circumstances will my name or any information which could identify me be included in the final report. In addition, I have been provided with a written *Guarantee of Confidentiality* by the researcher.**

b) **I will be free to withdraw from the study at any point and, if I so decide, any information that I have provided will not be included in the report or the final thesis.**

c) **All interviews will be tape-recorded and transcribed in order to assist in analysis of data.**

d) **A transcribed copy of the interview will be provided to me as soon as possible after the interview has taken place.**

Letter of Intent to Participate In the Study - Page 2

e) After being provided with a transcribed copy of the interview, I will be able to make any revisions that I feel are necessary even if it involves completely striking certain information from the record.

f) I am aware of the name of the researcher (Mélanie Lizotte) and the department/institution to which this study/thesis will be submitted (Educational Policy Studies/University of Alberta).

g) An executive summary and/or report of the final thesis will be provided to me (upon request) in recognition of my assistance in this study.

h) My approval to participate is given subject to guarantee of confidentiality and anonymity noted in the attached form. My signature is provided to demonstrate that the researcher has read this document to me and that I understand its contents.

Name of Participant:____________________________

Signature: ____________________________

Date: ____________________________

Researcher's Initials: ____________________________

Address for those requesting a copy of the research report:

____
____
____
____